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ABSTRACT

This document includes articles on programs for the gifted in urban and rural areas. Jean Blanning writes a personalized case-oriented record of an independent studies program offered in an urban high school (in New Haven, Connecticut) serving large numbers of minority children. This section gives testimony to the effectiveness of dedicated teachers working one-to-one or in intimate groups, and includes student work. The items on rural education outline special programs in education of rural gifted, modes of education, and techniques for dispersal of opportunity, and describe a successful rural cooperative. Martin J. Burnbaum discusses the special needs and educational problems of the rural gifted. Paul Plowman proposes various strategies for meeting the needs of rural gifted and talented youth. Gil Caudill examines the steps taken in implementing gifted programs in Kansas. A list of books available on the subject of gifted children is also provided. (Author/EB)

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Ideas for
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Case Histories
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Therefore, federal programs must be operated in compliance with this law.

Cover Photo: Author Jean M. Blanning and Curtis, student in Independent Study Program, James Hillhouse High School, New Haven, Connecticut. Photograph by Kenneth Randolph, former student in the Independent Study Program.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD
by Maurice F. Freehill, Professor and Chairperson v
Department of Educational Psychology, University of Washington

PREFACE ix

PART I:

Gifted Adolescents in an Urban Independent Study Program 1
by Jean M. Blanning, Coordinator of Independent Study Program
James Hillhouse High School, New Haven, Connecticut
Photograph: At the Long Library Table 2
Acknowledgements 2

CHAPTER I.

Introduction to our Gifted and Potentially Gifted Adolescents 3
The Purpose is to Answer Two Questions 3
Students Come to Grips with Setting 4

CHAPTER II.

A Journey with Curtis – A Potentially Gifted Student 5
Potential Can Come Alive 5
Writings Depicted Life in Ghetto 5
One-Act Play Enfolds 6
Enjoyed University Setting 7
Drama Group Rehearses Play 7
A Sense of Accomplishment 8
Probation Cut in Half 8
A New Pattern Would Emerge 9
Attendance and Writing Slipped 10
Started Seeing Things Differently 10
"A Piece of Chance" by Curtis 11
Strong Sense of Individuality 12
Couldn't Leave Him in Midair 12
Asked To Be Withdrawn from School 13
Explored College Catalogs 14

CHAPTER III.

A Portrait of Willie: Views from the Library – A Gifted Student 17
Did Figuring in his Head 17
Aware of his Absences 18
Summer Reading List Intrigued Me 18
Takes Things in Stride 19
Thought Explorations through Conferences 20
Showed Respect for his School 20
"While Waiting" by Willie Sessions 22

CHAPTER IV.
Student Projects 27
Harold's Motivation Was Intense 27
Tom Interested in Kidney Problems 27
Professor Helps Joe with Oceanography 28
Sally Works with Mentally Retarded 28
Barbara Discovers History Is Real 29
Tanya Creates Own Theory 29
Peter Does Animal Lab Work 30

CHAPTER V.
Selection of Students 31
Writing Is Usual Creative Form 31
Know You as Total Person 31

CHAPTER VI.
The Potentially Gifted Student 33
Most Have Consistently Good Grades 33
Tenaciously Hold to Inner Visions 34

CHAPTER VII.
ISP Structures—The 40-Minute Hour 35
Extraordinary Conference Performance 35
What Really Distinguished an Intellectual 35
"The Black Male Intellectual" by Louis Brown 37

CHAPTER VIII.
ISP Structures – Six Students in a Seminar 39
Elected Seminar in Social Psychology 39
Socratic Questioning 39
A Tension and a Need 40
Atmosphere of Respect and Appreciation 41
Tammie 41
James 41
Beverly 42
Marilyn 42
Sequella 43
Rick 43

CHAPTER IX.
ISP Structures – Seniors Assist in Classroom 47
Opportunities for Seniors 47
Provide Academic Models 47
Learned How To Conduct Music Class 48
Research Assistant in Spanish 49
Observed Students' Abilities 50
Research Assistant Paper by Sandra Henderson 51

EPILOGUE 53

APPENDIX A.
"The Destiny of Humankind" by Willie Sessions. 57

APPENDIX B.
"A Theory of a Sense of Belonging" by Tanya A. Taylor 63

PART II:

Educational Problems of Rural Education for the Gifted 67
by Martin J. Birnbaum, Specialist, Able and Gifted Program
Multnomah County Intermediate Education District
Portland, Oregon

Community Climate 69
Educational Problems 69

PART III:

What Can Be Done for Rural Gifted and Talented Children and Youth . . 71
by Paul Plowman, Director
"Development of Teaching Competencies—Gifted and Talented"
Section 404, P.L. 93-380 grant to California Department of Education

Identification of Rural Gifted Children and Youth 73
Guidelines 74
Access 76
Transportation 76
Voice and Image Transmission 76
Correspondence. 76
Motivating Rural Gifted and Talented Children. 77
State Programs 77
What Federally-Supported Teacher Center Might Do To Establish
and Improve Programs for the Gifted and Talented. 78
Institutions of Higher Education. 78
Independent Study for Teachers of Rural Gifted and Talented. 79
Administrative Involvement and Support 80
A Proposed Regional Summer Honors Program
for Gifted and Talented Youth—Rural and Urban. 80
Rural Programs 82
The Situation Now in California 83
The Dream 83
Figure 1. Assessment of Higher Intellectual Skills
and Traits of Creativity 84

References. 85

PART IV:

Program Implementation and Programming for Rural Gifted Students . .89
by Gil Caudill, Gifted Consultant
Northwest Kansas Educational Cooperative
Colby, Kansas
Social Responsibilities. 91
Ten Implementation Steps 91
The Kansas Honors Symposium 92

FOREWORD

by Maurice F. Freehill, Professor and Chairperson
Department of Educational Psychology, University of Washington

This volume contains four major elements, one on urban and three on rural education of the gifted. The treatments are quite different. Jean Blanning writes a personalized and case-oriented record of an independent studies program offered in a high school serving large proportions of minority children. This section gives testimony to the effectiveness of dedicated teachers working one-to-one or in intimate groups. It includes informative and attractive fragments of student work. It does not deal with alternate educational approaches or with other age groups in urban schools.

The items on rural education are more generalized. They outline special problems in education of rural gifted, modes of education, and techniques for dispersal of opportunity as well as a report on a successful rural cooperative.

The value of these essays will be restricted if we insist on a single dichotomy of settings into non-divergent urban and non-divergent rural. The view will be further distorted if we hold either static or stereotyped perceptions about differences between rural and city neighborhoods.

The 1970 U.S. census classifies the population as 53,887,000 rural and approaching three times that number (149,325,000) urban, more than 16 million were under five years, more than 34 million were between 5 and 13 and almost 17 million were 14 to 17. At a rate of 2.5 percent for intellectually or academically gifted, there are approximately 400,000, 850,000, and 425,000 gifted students in these age groups. The literature on gifted supports a guess that less than 700,000 of the 1,275,00 school age gifted children are identified for their abilities. However, there is little to tell us whether cases are distributed evenly in country and city or whether talents are most accurately identified in small rural groups, urban communities, or crowded cities.

From an educational perspective, the differences between urban and rural are fuzzy and made increasingly so by sharp changes in child-bearing patterns as well as by a cessation or a reversal in earlier migrations that regularly took able youth to industrial cities. Contemporary farmers do not constitute a major pool of untravelled, permanently poor group, living monotonous lives untouched by commercial media. Those on non-subsistence or near-city farms may have steady interaction with urban services and many truly rural children bus to city and town schools with programs of unusual range and quality.

Neither may cities be lumped as one entity. The familial expectations, the resources, and the intellectual stimulation of a Madison, Wisconsin, or a Palo Alto, California, are probably not more comparable with urban Detroit or New Orleans than with Lewiston, Idaho, or Fallbrook, California. There is need for simple research to discover the distributions of talent, the degrees to which abilities are recognized and the educational influences that prevail in these different communities. In the meantime, state and national efforts are directed by more or less educated guesses on such issues.

Both research and guessing would be enhanced by the examination of educational settings and availability of intellectual models rather than by simply comparing rural and urban locations. A "big is better" philosophy with a widespread concern over specialism has combined to create in American education a trend toward consolidation, proliferation of courses and the acquisition of specialized technical equipment. For the gifted that trend probably peaked between 1958 and 1963.

The drive for large schools and specialized offerings was blunted partly by a shift of concern from technologic perfection to problems of social disorder and personal meaning. Communities objected to depersonalization and contamination of mores which were viewed as side-effects of mass education. Research confirms that numbers and equipment in schools may provide only an illusion of influence, vitality, and achievement.

Studies in Kansas show that small schools are not small in the number and variety of behavioral settings or in significant participations by students (Barker and Gump, 1964). As schools increase in size they do increase in differentiation but at a much slower rate. Schools with 20 times as many students and five times as many settings offered only 1.4 times the variety in settings. Small schools produced more extracurricular participation. The gifted in small schools, were enrolled in fewer academic classes and more music, commercial, and physical education classes. More important than enrollment, however, are matters of available models, depth of subject matter and opportunities to develop intellectual independence. The research indicates increases in participation, student satisfaction, and responsibility in smaller schools. However, dispersed activities and versatility may produce shallowness. It seems unlikely that there

would be many artist and scientist models or mentors in rural communities. In reality, city proximity to these models seems to produce contact in suburban schools more than central city schools. In brief, the advantages of large schools may be exaggerated and the estimate of academic deprivation in rural groups overestimated.

School-provided opportunities are important, but Plato was probably not the first to note that interests and achievements will reflect the values of family and society. Is it these larger community settings which are most essentially different for rural and urban children? A study of *Elmtown's Youth* (Hollingshead, 1949) was one of a series (Warner, 1963; Thernstrom, 1964) of community studies that show relatively limited intergenerational economic and social advance based on ability.

These investigations stress SES (Socio-economic-status) differences but the predictions of achievement prove to be chained and complex. They include variables such as seeing opportunity and identifying with the outcome.

Later work by Coleman (1968) and then Jencks (1972) produced a widespread popular conviction that schooling had little influence that was independent of family background and social class climate in the school. More recently, the American Institutes of Research have reported on a five year study of 13 diverse school districts in nine states. (Steir, 1977). The findings are that educational growth is not uniquely associated with educational innovation, individualization, or school expenditures.

Interpretation of these findings should be moderate since the achievement measures focus on routine and common learnings omitting personal growth and complex cognitive development. The variables studied are less predictive for gifted populations and in very good schools. Furthermore, data from *Project Talent* (Shaycroft, 1967) and common observation attest to the importance of school effects. It remains true that parents, community, and media are highly influential in forming interests, ideas, and intentions.

Educational goals always pose a paradox between independence and interdependence. In both tribal and modern cultures there is a relation between effective autonomy of thought and child-rearing practices. A useful conceptualization of the difference comes from Harvey, et al. (1961). Persons who function at a high level of abstraction are inclined to be adaptable, creative, and curious. These qualities are encouraged in a strong feed-back environment, interdependent rather than unilateral. Highly creative and successful individuals ordinarily report that they were expected to be both independent and responsible and some remember sustained struggles against completely externally-imposed ideas or behavior.

Unilateral influences may be as much from peers as from parents, as much from TV as from teachers. There seems to be little basis for judging that rural parents are unusually dominant or that peer dominance is more profound in one situation or the other. It is possible that smaller numbers and greater stability of acquaintance assure that the school class becomes the significant peer group for most country children. Since it is in such groups that children identify a role, test reality, and find emotional anchorage it is possible that there are more influences toward conformance, average performance, and stereotyped ideas.

Blanning, in the section on independent study, addresses the importance of intimacy with other gifted children and with teachers. Urbanized and underprivileged children are particularly responsive to personalized adult attention. In any setting, the effective teacher grasps the significance of a student undertaking and extends appreciation, either excited or muted.

A maxim of education is to provide equal access to programs with a minimum of restrictive placement for any child. To maximize opportunity for all gifted children requires ingenuity in instructional procedures and materials for the urban poor and in making available materials and experiences suited to the rural child. The Plowman paper on "what can be done" offers numerous suggestions for sharing opportunities where there are small numbers of children.

The specifically rural problems outlined by Birnbaum may be ameliorated in part through cooperatives or consortiums of districts as described by Caudill in his paper on implementation. In many states there are special supplementary programs offered Saturday or in summer. Location of these offerings often excludes rural gifted. A partial compensation exists through special television offerings or mobile services.

Seminar series or short-course offerings at regional or state centers serve both rural and urban youngsters. In Washington State, Centrum Foundation has been supported by Washington State Arts Commission, Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Parks and Recreation Commission, National Endowment for the Arts, other state and federal grants, program revenues and private contributions. These resources have been used to provide creative opportunities, not for children only, but with a large program at the secondary level. There have been summer workshops in painting, the dance, writing, and music and conferences on public issues as well as continuing series of workshops designed through a state steering committee. The workshops have been in jazz arranging and composing, the arts of native Americans, law and justice, poetry and fiction, and other topics. The instructors are outstanding professionals working with assemblies of students and in surroundings that could not be provided by individual schools. The experiences are open to all districts, but community and teacher apathy may result in uneven use.

In this state the Seattle Science Center offers continuing complementary experiences most readily available in nearby urban and suburban districts but serving in lesser measure many children from a distance. Statewide offerings cannot meet basic educational needs but they could readily serve to motivate children and stimulate programs. Under the best conditions they might serve to clarify the murky questions of how programs are to be differentiated, what activities carry through, or what materials serve best.

The cause of the gifted is in high cycle. Parent groups and teachers are involved. This seems an opportune time to develop legislation, research, programs, and intellectual-emotional support that would open pools of talent wherever they exist in towns, the hearts of old cities, the suburbs, or the sparsely peopled places. The accompanying volume engages many of the issues.

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PREFACE

Covering certain aspects in the urban/rural areas of education for gifted and talented children, this handbook is addressed to teachers, administrators, and parents interested in these subjects.

Written by four practicing experts in their respective fields of education, the chapters are based upon their experience, insights gained, and implications seen. The writers about rural programs work in Oregon, California, and Kansas, but their ideas may just as well apply to the East or South.

Readers will see possible adaptations from what Jean Blanning is doing in Connecticut to their situations in Illinois or Texas, or wherever. Two personal comments from Blanning follow: "Many people look at independent study as haphazard. I want to stress that our program is not all a do-your-own-thing project. The aim is to give academic quality which will prepare the student for a four-year liberal arts college. . . . (I want to make clear that) most of our Black students are honor roll students, conscientious academically and highly responsible for determining their daily routine and future. I feel this fact is essential for leaders in the field of giftedness among minorities to understand in some measure. Otherwise, we fall into the newspaper vision of concentrating on the unusual when our task as educators is to discover and work daily with the gifted disadvantaged (we find in abundance)."

Readers are invited to comment on the material in this handbook, to offer suggestions for future printings, and/or send in information about other urban and rural programs that could also be useful to those who help the gifted and talented.

Barbara Johnson
Publications Editor

Part I

GIFTED ADOLESCENTS IN AN URBAN INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM

by

Jean M. Blanning

Coordinator of Independent Study Program

James Hillhouse High School

New Haven, Connecticut

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to express my appreciation to the students who appear in this book and to all the students, past and present, in the Independent Study Program. Each student provided inspiration for its writing. Students whose work is included read the chapters pertaining to them and gave their permission for use of their material and the references to them.

The administrators of the Hamden-New Haven Cooperative Education Center, Robert Avery, Director, and George Conquest, Coordinator of the Independent Study Programs in the four high schools, read the manuscript and encouraged me to seek publication. The Center Board read several sections and approved them. Eugene Vitelli, principal of James Hillhouse High School, read the manuscript and enthusiastically endorsed it.

Sylvia Mitarachi edited the manuscript. For one year she received material once a month, edited and discussed it with me during our luncheon engagements. Through her genuine interest in the subject and her astute questions and comments, I could clarify my thoughts and sharpen my directions.

Frances Bennett, English staff member of the Center, edited "A Journey with Curtis" which was written as a separate article and published in the November, 1975, issue of *Talents and Gifts*. Mrs. Bennett had read Curtis' poetry during the course of his work in the Program and consulted with him on his play. With this knowledge of him, she read the article with sensitivity to its nuances and made helpful suggestions.

Elizabeth Alegi, the secretary for the Independent Study Programs, gave precious time for careful typing of the manuscript. Her enthusiasm as an objective reader was rewarding.

The Independent Study Center staff members appear in the manuscript as participants in the Program at James Hillhouse High School. Each staff member acts as a resource person to the coordinators of the other high schools and, when appropriate, acts as an advisor to a student or students in those high schools. Frances Bennett (English), Sung-wen Chang (Mathematics and Chemistry), William Collins (Biology and Ecology), and Linda Sheehan (Chemistry) have each in his/her way contributed to the Program described in this manuscript.

Jean M. Blanning

AT THE LONG LIBRARY TABLE, a seminar meets under the direction of Coordinator Jean M. Blanning, Independent Study Program, James Hillhouse High School, New Haven, Connecticut (second from left). A consultant and doctoral candidate in social psychology at Yale University, W. Coleman (left) talks to students Theresa Sims, Tanya Taylor, James Dinnan, Mark Zeoli, and Aleta McClam (left to right). Photo reprinted from the Boston Herald American *with permission.*

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION TO OUR GIFTED AND POTENTIALLY GIFTED ADOLESCENTS

The Independent Study Program for Gifted and Potentially Gifted High School Students seeks to identify and foster gifted young people in three urban high schools and one suburban high school. Funded under Special Education legislation and guided by the Office of Talented and Gifted in the State of Connecticut, this Program is administered by the Hamden-New Haven Cooperative Education Center, a suburban-urban venture designed to innovate and test programs for the public schools. A director supervises the work of five staff members who are teachers in the major academic subjects. These staff members coordinate the Programs in the high schools and advise students in independent studies. In each high school, classroom teachers act as advisors to students in subject areas other than the Coordinator's.

The five staff members are full-time workers paid on the regular classroom teacher's scale for the town of Hamden. No Center staff person teaches in a classroom, but they consult with students on a one-to-one basis and in small group seminars both in the schools which they coordinate and in the other high schools at the request of those coordinators. All staff members act as resource persons for the other staff members. Weekly meetings and occasional all-day workshops keep the staff working together constantly and consistently, while maintaining their individual responsibilities in the four high schools.

All staff members have advanced degrees. Two hold MA degrees in their subject fields from Yale University Teacher Training Program. One holds two Masters degrees, one in her subject field and one in religious education from the Divinity School of Yale University. One has his sixth-year degree in school administration. Two have lectured in universities: one at Brandeis University and one at New York University. One has held several part-time positions as research associate to university professors at Harvard and Yale and full-time position as Supervisor of English interns, the Office of Teacher Training at Yale University. Only one has had extensive classroom teaching: seven years. One staff member has had one year of classroom teaching.

The Independent Study Program at James Hillhouse High School, a predominantly Black high school in New Haven, is the subject of this book. My relationship to this Program is as its Coordinator and the advisor of independent study projects in social studies. Classroom teachers in English, mathematics and science advise students in these subject areas.

Purpose Is To Answer Two Questions

The purpose of describing this Program, with stories and papers of students, with discussion of its approaches, and with narrative accounts of two unusual students, is to answer two questions. **Who are gifted adolescents in the inner city? How can educators meet their needs?** Any attempt to answer these questions requires first explanation of the title: *Gifted Adolescents in an Urban Independent Study Program*.

Gifted refers to academic giftedness or potential, the ability to think creatively, conceptually and critically, to be curious and ask questions, to observe sharply, and to perceive sensitively. In this book, gifted also refers to the determination to strive for excellence.

Education for the gifted provides an opportunity for the mind to have room to explore and expand to its furthest boundaries and to meet challenges that exercise it to its limits. It provides resources that cause the mind to stretch out to more discoveries; it provides guidance to direct it along the risky unknown routes it takes. It is education based on the premise that the gifted and potentially gifted* have special educational needs because of the intensity with which their minds generate ideas; however, a corollary to this premise is that the ways which work for the gifted may stimulate the entire educational system into new directions and realizations. Education for the gifted may contribute to education for all.

Education for gifted adolescents needs to rest on the belief that adolescents respond to learning environments in which adults set limits and make requirements that enable students to win in their struggle for freedom. Within the context of guidance, students want to stand on their own feet, make their own decisions and choices, assume responsibility for themselves, find their own talents and potential, their limits, their possibilities, and their hopes based on new ways of looking at the world. They press to become aware of the world around them, its influences, its pressures, its values, its opportunities, and to weigh the world on their terms. Distracted by new urges, impulses and drives, they need supportive relationships which will help them in the process of sorting out directions to take. In the fight for responsible freedom the setbacks, failures, and frustations

* For detailed definition, please refer to Chaper VI, p. 33, "The Potentially Gifted Student."

which occur challenge the adolescent's initiative and assertiveness. If they experience learning as an acceptable life style within an environment, and relationships which encourage their assertiveness, they can go into the unknown and unexplored with a confidence in themselves. Their own style of thought, feeling, and learning and their creative strengths become their resources. They can become adults.

Gifted adolescents growing up in cities need to understand the forces that surround and influence them, the powers of urban institutions, the diversities of the city's life styles, and the strivings of its various groups. If these forces are not clarified, young people feel helpless and may become angry and frustrated with something "out there" or within themselves. If students can regard themselves and their society with some objectivity, their potential can be realized. Knowing the vitality of the city depends on the pursuit and expression of individual and group interests, on a variety of abilities and on the communication of differing perspectives, students can begin to build upon their own interests, abilities and perspectives and to assess their contributions to society. With confidence and a sense of belonging, young people can find the city a place of opportunity instead of a prison.

Students Come to Grips with Setting

In an independent study program in an urban high school, students can come to grips with their setting as they explore their own possibilities and find disciplined direction for the expression of themselves. Through opportunities and resources not duplicated in the classroom, through curriculum designed around the students' special academic goals and through structured appointments with teacher-advisors, the students can develop inner direction, and responsibility for themselves.

The words of a teacher-advisor best describe what can happen to students in the Program: "When you consider the incredible problems many of these young people in the city face, yet observe that a student's attendance, appearance, and work habits are very good, you suspect that this particular young person has something special to offer. To come through the maelstroms with some sense of poise and 'put togetherness' indicates something. The students may not be realizing their potential, however, for they often need confidence and self-esteem. In the Independent Study Program the relationship of trust that can develop between an advisor and student can help to develop the necessary self-confidence and self-esteem which lead to self-assertion and mastery and in turn bring out that 'something special.' This relationship has an openness about it that surmounts any barriers between the student and the advisor of male-female, Black-White, and youth-age."

In bringing about a sense of awareness, the advisor faces a two-fold challenge. In the first semester the need is to help the student focus and organize his or her thoughts, learn to research in depth, solve problems and assume responsibility, not only for weekly work but also for independent thinking. In the second semester a student is more committed to his or her interests and initiates more directions. The need at this time is to help the student analyze critically, interpret, draw significant conclusions, stretch the mind and imagination and discover original or creative approaches and insights.

The move is from the "book report or encyclopedic" style of learning and leaning on authorities to an interpretative style of learning and, with guidance, to depending on one's own resources.

The gifted and potentially gifted push towards independence; adolescents push towards independence. Urban living demands initiative and self-assertion in place of passivity and anonymity for its strengths to survive and its problems to find solutions. An urban independent study program for gifted and potentially gifted high school students can serve as one way to stimulate vitality.

Chapter II

A JOURNEY WITH CURTIS – A POTENTIALLY GIFTED STUDENT *

"Curtis is a thoughtful and creative, sensitive young man with a strong desire to develop his intellectual potential and at the same time struggling against the attractions of street life."

Mrs. Powell, school social worker

"A Journey with Curtis" developed from Curtis' work in the Independent Study Program. Curtis read several autobiographies as part of his project in the program and decided to explore the idea of writing an autobiography himself. First, he wanted to tape some of his story in our weekly conference sessions. After going through this process orally, he decided not to write an autobiography after all. However, I was impressed with his story and was inspired to write about his experience in the Program with some of his autobiographical material included. With Curtis' interest and approval, I wrote "A Journey with Curtis" with the long quotations in the article based on selections from his tapes. Curtis participated in reading the material each step of the way.

All of the names in the article itself are fictitious. Persons referred to in the article have given their permission for the references to them. Curtis and his family graciously have given their consent for the use of the material and have expressed their enthusiasm for the article.

Potential Can Come Alive

The story is told from my perspective and experience as Curtis' advisor. The pupose of telling this story is to point out that potential in inner city youth can come alive triumphantly and not be wasted tragically. Curtis is one individual; his journey is unique. Yet, Curtis speaks through his experience to other youth who face similar hazards along their journeys toward self-actualization. He brings a simple message. Learn how to recognize potential, learn how to recognize it early, realize that it is never too late to recognize, bring to bear all the resources at hand to develop that potential, and something can happen.

Something started happening for Curtis in the Independent Study Program (ISP) one day in February, 1972. He came with Miss Coles, his guidance counselor, into the carrel section of the library where I hold conferences with my ISP students. At that time, I was catching up with my resource reading and glancing out of the window at the single tree that always told me of the change of seasons. That day it was covered with snow sparkling in the bright sun. A vitality seemed to burst forth from it even though the buds of future blossoms were hidden. The tree provided the setting for the initial interview with Curtis in the selection process for the Program and became a symbol for our journey.

Miss Coles introduced him to me. Curtis, slight in build and five feet eight inches tall, stood silently as Miss Coles went on to describe why she brought him to me.

"Curtis has shown me, off and on, poetry he's written. Yesterday he came into my office and showed me a short story. I read it and liked it. Then the thought struck me that it might make a good one-act play. The Independent Study Program seemed a natural place for him to work on it. He was interested in meeting you and exploring the possibilities for a play." Miss Coles spoke in the tentative diplomatic tones she used when she felt that perhaps she had glimpsed some hidden talent in a "turned-off" student.

It was mid-year, and she knew that our students usually were interviewed and accepted into the program every April for the following September. However, Miss Coles had a proven sharpness for spotting bright, creative students, even though their past academic records might be low in marks and high in absenteeism. If she was excited, I was challenged; I agreed to interview him. She left Curtis and me at the conference table, and the journey began.

Writings Depicted Life in Ghetto

My first task in the selection process was to look at his writings. When I asked him about the papers he was holding, he handed me copies of his poetry and the short story. As I sat reading them, I slowly began to feel gripped by the words. His writings depicted life in the ghetto with detailed descriptions that revealed a keen observer's eye and a nature sensitive to suffering. He spoke of the stresses; he presented a pride and a determination. Touches of cynicism and humor were traced throughout. His short story asked profound questions, questions about human behavior and

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questions about society. It asked specifically how a seemingly fine religious young man could come back from the war as a drug pusher. How could a moral person turn destructive? What were the pressures from society that might affect such a change in a person? How does one interpret such a change? We talked about these questions for a while and as we did, I thought that Curtis not only asked penetrating questions, but also explored complicated concepts.

His writings seemed to show that he was an omnivorous reader. At seventeen he had absorbed vocabulary and skills somewhere, if not in school. From his writings and through our discussion, I was able to assess that Curtis was creative in his thinking and talented in his expression. He had certain characteristics of an out-of-the-ordinary person. Through these traits, he met some of the requirements for acceptance into the program.

My next task was to find out about his interests and goals. With a casualness in the conversation, Curtis discussed his desires to write the play and build up a collection of poems. He mentioned several titles of books on urban problems that he hoped to read. Our paperback book fund could provide these for him. We talked about some of the books he had read in the past on his own. Indeed, from the number he mentioned, he was a reader. With my understanding of his interests, I could determine that Curtis had goals he could pursue in ISP with the guidance and resource help of an advisor. He was eligible for the program. He had literary talent, could think analytically and creatively, and could work independently on specific projects. His story might be turned into a play and provide a project to begin work on immediately. His counselor recommended him as a student with potential.

Throughout the interview, I sensed some quality in this young man that went beyond the basic requirements for acceptance into the program. Curtis seemed to have a sense of himself and an inner-directedness unusual for a person his age. My intuitive reaction to these aspects of Curtis' personality was my greatest ally on the "journey," especially when his attendance and marks in other courses remained highly erratic.

The end of the forty-five minute interview was near. It was time to make a decision about the subject area and advisor for Curtis in ISP. Since so many of his questions and his readings focused on psychological and sociological concerns, I finally felt that he could work with me in social studies. For guidance in his writing, we would ask Mrs. Williams, the staff member in English for all the Independent Study Programs, to act as a consultant. Curtis agreed to this arrangement and was enthusiastic about meeting with Mrs. Williams within the next week.

Mrs. Williams happily agreed to consult with Curtis, and in their first conference helped him set up an outline for the play. She came away from their conversation impressed with his imagination, brightness, and determination.

"It's not going to be easy to put this story into a play, but I think it can be done. We've outlined some scenes, and I think he's ready to get started," Mrs. Williams explained to me after she had conferred with Curtis.

When she left, I probed him to get his reaction to the consultation: "Mrs. Williams says that it's going to be hard to do, but she does think the story would make a good play. What do you think?"

"It's a challenge. I want to do it." Curtis used few words when he spoke, but they were always telling.

One-Act Play Enfolds

In two scheduled conferences a week, instead of the usual one, Curtis and I went to work discussing ideas, discussing dialogue, and getting the words on paper. Mrs. Williams reviewed the rough drafts periodically and made suggestions; Curtis acted on them. As the one-act play unfolded, we naturally began to visualize production. But who would produce it and for what reason?

In the midst of this speculation, Mr. Roberts, the director of the educational center sponsoring all the Independent Study Programs, asked me if I had any student whose work could be shown at a regional conference for leaders in the field of special education for the talented. My reaction was immediate. I told him about Curtis' play, and he felt that we could have it videotaped for the conference workshop. Who would perform it and who would videotape it were open-ended questions at the time. Curtis and I did know that we wanted to accept the offer. Since the conference would be held in our city the next fall and it was now near the end of the school year, Curtis would need to sign up for our volunteer summer program. He agreed to attend, with every intention of finishing the play.

The summer session was set up for students who wanted to continue their projects without a break from the academic year, or for students who wanted to get started on their projects for the next year. The flexibility and relaxation in summer schedules, however, often siphoned off students from some of their conferences. With Curtis, the commitment became complex. During the year, he usually showed up at his conference appointments even though he was attending school irregularly. During the summer, he was like a butterfly, perhaps beautiful in flight but hard to capture. Sketches of staged scenes were planned and promised, but not produced. With the deadline of the regional conference in the near future, I had to maniuplate ways to get to Curtis.

I knew that Curtis wanted to attend the play, "Don't Play Us Cheap," by Melvin Van Peebles, that the students in the summer program were going to see in New York City. I had the tickets. In a telephone call to Curtis I suggested that he meet me in front of the local hospital, near his home, so that I could give him his ticket. He met me.

As I gave him the ticket, I suggested that we go to the library of the nearby university to work on some scenes. He jumped into the car, went with me to the library, and worked intently for two hours. The capacity for work was there; his need for structuring himself to do it was apparent.

Enjoyed University Setting

Other things became evident that day. After our library session, we walked through one of the beautiful museum-like buildings of the university where rare books are kept and displayed in magnificent glass cases. He ambled through the building with a sense of awe and appreciation. I was made even more deeply aware of his aestheticism. I also was impressed that he had enjoyed the university setting, not only in the library, but also in this building. He could have felt awkward and uncomfortable. I wondered if he had ever dimly thought about going to college. I would look forward to learning more about his responses to beauty and store the question about college in a special slot in my mind after this day.

The play in New York proved to be a stimulus since it was written by a Black playwright, depicted life in the Harlem ghetto and was a touching musical comedy. Curtis finished his own play by the end of summer. In September, we had to turn our attention to production.

However, an ominous new ruling demanded our concern, especially mine. The school system had established new regulations for the coming year in which attendance was to be strongly stressed. In our program, we depend on sufficient time to work with the students who have responded poorly in previous years to the classroom structure, using our particular style of learning. We have found that if we expend patience intially, these students usually attain the intellectual self-confidence and excitement that inspire them to attend classroom courses with regularity. Under the new rules and regulations, I felt a responsibility, to put unusual pressure on Curtis to attend all his classes. I tried to point out the importance of his attendance to our work. If he had to be withdrawn from school, all our plans would go with him.

I felt a sense of despair as I realized that he was taking one step forward and two steps backwards in his attempts to attend his classes. My next tactic was to try the "token" system from behavioral psychology. I purchased the record album of "Don't Play Us Cheap," which I knew he liked, and entered into a bargain with him. Album and attendance were to go together. He got the album; I did not get the attendance. Again, he had entered the arrangement in good faith but discovered that it was not easy to change one's style of living radically and quickly.

I did decide to keep the administrator who was responsible for our Program in this school informed about Curtis' work and progress in independent study. His response revealed real interest but also concern that Curtis understand "the realistic facts" of attendance rules. Sensing his supportiveness, I again mainly focused on the coming conference. I felt the relationship of trust between Curtis and me was jeopardized by my constant consideration of his other courses. The pressure for the play to be produced took precedence.

Drama Group Rehearses Play

Fortunately, the drama group in the high school had a free period on its schedule; the members were excited to perform Curtis' play. Rehearsals were scheduled every afternoon for a few weeks, and Curtis attended them all on the invitation of the drama director, Miss Barker. She felt that he could answer any questions that came up concerning the script. He also selected and taped the music he wanted for background. He spent several hours by himself in a little room in the back of the school library studying selections from records that he thought would express the mood of his play.

With music on his mind, it seemed appropriate to offer him one of the few tickets the Program had set aside for the Duke Ellington concert to be held over a long weekend at the university in our city. When I handed him the envelope with the ticket in it, he sat back in his chair, held the envelope between his two hands and let his eyes and smile express his appreciation.

Then he said simply, "This is the best birthday present I've ever had. I'll be eighteen Friday. It means a lot to me to see this concert. Thank you."

Shortly after the concert, he had an opportunity to see "Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope," a Black musical on Broadway that students in the Program and drama group attended. During this production, Curtis sat engrossed in the music, lyrics, dances, and staging. He talked about some of his reactions on the bus ride back. I suspected again that the feelings he experienced through music, lyrics, poetry and plays fed his own creative springs.

When rehearsal for his play production seemed polished by actual performances, Mr. Johnson, the coordinator of the independent study programs in all the high schools, offered to videotape it. He became acquained with Curtis during these tapings and began playing a significant, behind-the-scenes supportive role along the Journey.

The production and taping involved days of takes and retakes but, as a result, a spirit of camaraderie stimulated all of us. At the end of the shooting, the drama group players celebrated by putting on a buffet supper for all of us in the rehearsal room. It was the climax to a rewarding experience for everyone involved in the production. For Curtis, it was a lifetime highlight. He and his peers had participated in bringing his creation to life.

A preview of the tape was planned for the students and staff of the program in the library of the high school. The school librarian, in the beginning of the year, had set aside the use of the library for the Independent Study Program every day for a certain period. In this way, we could have a showing and discussion for seventy-five people where honest reactions could come forth. Curtis wanted to get audience reaction and peer opinion. He also invited a few of his friends who were not in the Program.

The showing at school spelled success. The videotaped play hit the audience hard with the emotional impact Curtis had intended; the questions from the audience conveyed genuine curiosity and interest. Curtis answered them all with a combination of aplomb, pride, and humility. Conversations with the librarian and the English department chairman, after the group broke up, revealed their enthusiasm and their interest in continuing their assistance to Curtis' work in whatever way they could.

The principal of the high school wrote a note to Mr. Roberts and Mr. Johnson after he saw the videotape: "Many of our students have been 'turned on' and afforded educational opportunities and experiences previously unavailable in their curriculum. Repeatedly, students have been 'reborn' in this program and awakened to and have attained horizons, thought by some to be unattainable."

A Sense of Accomplishment

Curtis' spirits reflected the mood of the principal's words. He was in a state of exhilaration: "I've never felt such a sense of accomplishment. I didn't know I could do anything. I feel satisfaction, a kind of fulfillment." He stood by the long table in the carrels as he spoke with me alone after everyone had left the library. "My friends liked it. They came up to me and said, 'Man, that play was *baad*!!" Curtis sat down relaxed and happy. These few words of his friends meant that they were not going to rib him for his intellectual and artistic interests. The whole experience had established a certain security for his Journey.

I became aware of a strange sense of the miraculous, of mysterious forces pulling everything together. The suggestion of Miss Coles about the play, Curtis' entry into the program, Mrs. Williams' advice on dramatic form, the drama group's participation, Mr. Johnson's taping, the conference workshop's opportunity—all seemed aspects of a process directing Curtis into some unknown future. This sensation was powerful enough to sustain me in the future when our work sometimes seemed devoid of creation.

What seemed stranger was an experience Curtis described then to me in response to my remarks about the "miraculous." The experience had happened to him before he had entered the program: "I had to go to court once, and I was really uptight about that because I was on probation. On the day I went to court, the judge and prosecutor were just sending people away. I got kind of shaky and told them I was going home because I had been hanging around there all day long. When I got home, I really started thinking about that prosecutor and that judge. They sent a notice that same night for me to come back the next morning.

"I went back the next morning, and the same judge and the same prosecutor were there. They called my name up, and I went up to them. I knew they were going to come down on me. Instead, the prosecutor just looked at me and said, 'I don't have anything to say about this case.' All I could say was 'Wow!' I couldn't believe my ears. I thought something was wrong.

"The judge looked at me and told me. 'Two years in the state reformatory————————suspended sentence.' I just let go inside before that word *suspended*. Then I was really happy, man.

"It was one of those times when I felt something miraculous was going on. I had felt it before, but never like this. I'm not what you would call religious, but my mother was praying for me all night before that day, and I do believe her prayers were what did it. That prosecutor just looked at me and told the judge he didn't have anything to say. He had my record and my photograph right in front of him. He did say, 'He's on probation now.' And then he just didn't say anything. It was the first time I had seen his mouth closed in two days.

Probation Cut in Half

"And the probation officer they assigned me to was different. Before, I had been assigned to a man who saw me once and said, 'Just stay out of trouble.' I never went in to see him again. But this probation officer made a difference in my life. She had a way of relating to people because she was young, maybe, or because of the kind of job she had. She knew what was going on. I hardly ever missed an appointment, and my probation was cut in half."

I had known that last year Curtis was seeing a probation officer. He had told me that he could not set up conferences with me on Tuesdays because that was the day he went to see her. I had avoided asking about his probation, purposely. In the Program, a student is known and accepted on the basis of the relationship in the conferences and the work performed. In this way, a student often is seen through fresh eyes and listened to by new ears. Such acceptance often proves crucial for growth to take place. For Curtis to reveal himself to me through this incident meant that he was willing now to discuss his present struggles to break out of past patterns.

"This reminds me. Would it be all right if Mrs. Herndon—that's the probation officer's name—came to the conference to see the play?" Curtis asked with a serious tone in his voice. "I think she would like to see what's going on with me now. I'd like to have her there."

I agreed to call her. I saw that Curtis never forgot people who made a difference in his life. A week later, he came into his conference with another request: "My mother and sisters would like to see the videotape at the conference, too. They want to know what I'm up to and what it's all about. Do you suppose they could come?"

We added their names to the guest list, along with Miss Coles and Miss Barker for Conference nametags.

The day of the conference arrived with nervousness on his part and mine. I had not seen Curtis in school that morning, but Miss Coles told me one half-hour before the workshop that Curtis had dropped into her office that day. She had encouraged him to go home and relax before the four o'clock performance. I visited with his guests in the lobby of the hotel where the Conference was being held. As I saw him quickly striding down the street and through the revolving doors, I sensed that he would never let himself down in a situation like this. I began to think that Curtis selected his activities with discrimination; he seemed to size up people, places and events, and make his decisions according to his own values and feelings.

In the Grand Ballroom of the hotel, one section had been partitioned off for the workshop. Curtis' family and friends were seated in the first rows on the right; participants in the workshop were scattered throughout the rest of the room. Mr. Roberts, our director, introduced the presentations of the several students scheduled for that afternoon. Mr. Johnson then announced the title of the play to be seen on videotape and the playwright, who would be available for questions after the showing.

As soon as the tape was over, a woman in the audience directed a question to Curtis. After his response, she asked if he could come to Kansas City sometime with the tape and discuss it with some students she had in a program. He replied graciously, indicating that the decision would be up to the Program and the school. She later indicated to me that the invitation may have sounded impractical, but that she had liked the tape and "fallen in love," so to speak, with Curtis. He handled all of the questions with a charming sophistication; the give and take concerning his work and the Program brought out his brightness and charisma.

A New Pattern Would Emerge

After the workshop, he introduced his family to all of us from the Program and the school. His mother and sisters remarked on their pleasure with the production. I had the feeling that perhaps some strands of Curtis' life were pulling together. With his family, people from school, and someone from his past style-of-life supporting him, perhaps a new pattern would emerge for him.

Yet in past work with Curtis, I had noticed that some small successes set off retreats. Such behavior seemed to say, "I can't be successful. I'm not that good, and it's not in the cards for me to get out of the street life." Many months later he told me that these were some of his thoughts. Of course, a certain period of withdrawal in some students, after they had experienced creative successes, was not unusual for me to witness. The experience of awakening to oneself, feeling one's intellectual and creative powers, can be frightening and risky. The path is unknown and untravelled. Sometimes it is more comfortable to go back and remain with the old patterns of performance.

For this reason I tried, after the Conference workshop, to get Curtis started on another play hoping that he would be too busy to react negatively to his success. In the next conference appointment, I asked him what kinds of questions were going through his mind that might be worked into another play.

Without hesitancy, he opened up his thoughts: "I've wondered why people have or haven't made it out of the ghetto. The older people say all the time they want their children to make it out. They don't want them to have the same rough life. Education. They keep telling the younger ones to get an education. At the same time, they may put pressure on them to get out and earn money right away. There's a conflict. And then you wonder to yourself: why didn't they make it out? Did they have chances and blow them somewhere along the way? Maybe they know all the ways to survive in the streets. I respect them for that. But someday I want to look my kids in the face, in the suburbs, and tell them that I made it out on my own. I want that kind of respect. I'm thinking about college. I'd like to go and graduate with some kind of degree that could help me help my younger brothers. Yet, I know there are lots of pulls in the opposite direction. Young people are going through a lot of turmoil today about which way to go. I'd like to write about what's going on inside of them."

These thoughts poured out in fifteen minutes. What was said spurred me on in my concern for Curtis. His own concern for other young people and for the adults he knew gave me a glimpse of his relations with the people important in his life.

Mrs. Herndon described her interpretations of these relationships. "There are a number of other aspects of Curtis which I admire. He is so profound, or full, as a person that he is able to sustain a number of very complex relationships with a lot more 'togetherness' than many adults I know. . . What I am trying to express is that Curtis has such a strong sense of his own dignity that he has a fine sense of the dignity of others."

Curtis certainly suffered the conflicts of any person in his relationships with family and friends, figuring out who he was, who the others were, and who he would become. But, as Mrs. Herndon pointed out, he seemed able to live with a diversity of relationships. His main concern was how society

had destructively defined the relationships for certain people. He knew the effects of such definitions on the family and friends he was fond of and wanted to challenge and change the attitudes behind them. What he wanted from any one person and society was a chance. He entitled his second play, "A Piece of Chance."

The one scene he wrote for this play* had tremendous possibilities. But beyond this scene, nothing seemed to take shape. Outside consultations on the play excited him, but the pen ran dry with it. He switched back to poetry and came up with two long poems; one on the ghetto in an original style and with imaginative detail, the other on love with a maturity of feeling unusual for a young person. He seemed to be tapping vital sources within himself, and the flow of creativity seemed assured.

Then the sources stopped. The retreat had set in and some unforeseen obstacles were blocking the way. His family had moved so far from the school that he had to walk an hour to get there. Owing to a bus strike, no public transportation was available. Rain and slush two or three days every week that winter delivered another blow. To accept offers of rides by me compromised him because he knew I had to go out of my way to pick him up, and he would become dependent. No one drove in that direction.

Attendance and Writing Slipped

At times when the "sun broke through" and his spirits were good, he came to his conferences and discussed the numerous books he had been reading during his absence. He picked up others that he wanted. Although attendance and writing had slipped, his reading had not.

During this period, my curiosity was aroused. What really was his pattern in school previous to the Program? What was his academic record from former years? Although Miss Coles and I had conferred together often about Curtis' potential and aptitude I never had looked at his entire four year sheet with all his courses and marks. She handed it to me one day, and I found myself staring at an academic profile with the total of three credits. At eighteen, Curtis was not even eligible to be a sophomore. How could someone with this record write so well? His vocabulary and grammatical skills were better than those of many of my students. His thinking, with its perception and creativity, warranted top grades. He had a specific talent that he had worked on before he came into the Program. My curiosity was not satisfied; in fact, it was only heightened. What had happened in the past?

When he came to his conference the next time, I decided to drop my usual lecture on his attendance and start with some questions. What had he felt about classes in elementary school? Had he ever enjoyed school? When had he started his writing? All the questions were answered with more information than I expected and with a depth of communion which indicated greater trust than I had hoped to develop: "I remember the actual day in sixth grade that I stopped going to school. My brother used to play hookey a lot. In the morning, the younger kids would go down one road, School Road we called it. It was the only way to get to school. When the kids going to school would go that way, my brother and his friends would go another way. He told me what he'd do on those days, like playing electric guitars with his friends. I finally got tired of going down that road myself. I was on my way to school one day, and I said to myself, 'I'm going to turn around.' I did. I skipped school for a long time. A friend of mine and I used to buy some cheap wine and then go up in the woods and drink it. Finally, it became a drag because it was the same old pattern. I just had to switch out of it. I found out that I had to repeat sixth grade so I decided to go back to school. That year I had a Black guy who taught Afro-American History and was good, and gave us a lot of interesting things to think about and talk about.

Started Seeing Things Differently

"I went to junior high pretty regularly, but in high school I started off badly. I'd get up and get dressed and then just walk around. I'd go into record shops and bookstores and just look or maybe go into a clothing store and try on a few jackets. Finally, I got bored and came to school. You know, there was a change from the junior high school to senior high. I wasn't ready to accept that change. Then I found out that there were some familiar faces at school, and I started going. But that's about all. I didn't go very much. I don't know why. It was just me. You know, some things you do and don't know why you do them. I questioned why I didn't go very much, but I never came up with an answer. I do know that I started seeing things differently. I became more aware of things—a lot of things. Maybe that was it."

He stopped talking and we started to explore further his thoughts on self-awareness: "It never occurred to me that I wasn't just another kid, but I never wanted to accept it, the fact that I was just another kid. You know, you might not just be another kid in your own eyes, but then again, you might be just another kid in everyone else's eyes. But how can you live with the thought that you're just another face in the crowd? So you end up thinking you're different. Even though some people wish they were just another face in the crowd, I never wished that. Not running with the crowd is difficult, though.

"Yet, I'm sure everyone wants to be outstanding, be accepted by everyone and not just one crowd. If you're in one crowd and that crowd accepts you, what about all the other crowds? What I mean by outstanding is that a person is accepted as an individual, apart from the crowd, but accepted by all crowds. It means having something special to offer or just being a certain type of person. That thought,

* See page 11.

A Piece of Chance
by
Curtis

(Three young men are having a few beers together and talking things over. Al, who wants to join the Army, has been ribbed by Lewis who thinks Al is seeking money, security and heroism. Lewis, who wants to go to college but needs money right now, suddenly becomes serious and turns to Gordy. Gordy wants to be an auto mechanic but finds himself under pressure to go to college.)

Lewis: Tell me something, Gordy, why aren't you goin' in the army? You're always talkin' 'bout how you are undecided about what you're gonna do when you graduate.

Gordy: Well, I dig auto mechanics, but my mother don't like the idea of me spendin' too much time messin' round cars at school and in the neighborhood because I'm not gettin' paid for it. She wants me to bend towards more skills, academic ones, she says, and go on to college. When I work for Old Gabe down at his garage, he can't afford to pay much because of his small business. You know that Gabe, funny ole guy, drives me nuts sometimes. (Imitating Gabe) "Go to college, go to college. This kind of work don't do no man no kind o' justice," he tells me over and over. Or "Don't spend yo' life under the hood o' nobody's car. I barely make 'nuff money to 'ford muh own." (Al and Lewis laugh at the imitation of Gabe.) Now, how in the hell does he know what I should do? I know what I like and what I want. He should know better than try and force me from my likes. Now tell me if that's right for him to tell me, Lew?

Lewis: It's not a question of who's right, man. Look at it this way. It must have been hell on that old man because of the road he chose to take, trying to discourage you from going that way, too. You know what I think? Our mothers and fathers, or the older Blacks in general, have come to learn the hard way how useful an education can be, just by their not having one. They go to work where a strong back and tough hands are all they need to do the job. The job itself has no future whatsoever; they're just doing it for us. They just can't bear seeing us do the same thing and adding to the vicious cycle. I know this is what my mother feels, and that's why she'd rather see me get an education and make money in something that uses my brains. (He pauses.) But then at other times, she talks about me getting a job right now. Money's short, you know.

(Lewis gets up from the table and walks to the window. He looks out and starts talking almost as if he were thinking out loud.)

This street thing, the idea of not having 'nuff money, is all I ever knew. I had to steal, gamble and a number of other things just to have money. Now I want to pull away, (pauses) go to college and make enough to live out of all this crap. I'm not sure if I'll ever be better off because I've never been anywhere before.

(Lewis turns suddenly to Gordy and Al.)

Maybe living like this, like I'm used to, the ways I've been used to, the ways I've been makin' money, has its good things. Take for instance, a man in prison. He learns to value his freedom more than anything else, so you know what is most valuable to a poor man, don't you? Money, man, money! 'Cause that's the name of the game or that's the way he feels because he doesn't have it.

(Lewis turns directly to Al.)

Al, I know how you feel, in a way. Money, now. I don't really know sometimes, Gordy, if you want the truth, which way I'm going.

that wish, occurs to me lots of times—that I'm not going to be, or don't want to be, just another face in the crowd. Of course, it's the way you deal with your feelings that makes you feel unique or different. It's your own way of dealing with your own feelings—like loneliness, joy, pain. That's the universality of every human. But every human being has something. Everybody's got 'his own thing.' Some people just suffer from a lack of expression. If you don't express yourself, your inner self is going to be lacking."

Strong Sense of Individuality

I realized from these remarks that Curtis had a strong sense of individuality and yet never felt he was so unique that he could not relate to his fellow man. Several times in conferences he had mentioned that he wanted his writing to have universal appeal. He wanted to express human feelings, no matter what the subject matter was.

These last thoughts of mine led into questions about his writing. He said: "I've always been quiet, but I'd think a lot to myself. Sometimes I would walk for hours early in the morning or late at night to get my thoughts sorted out or to watch a changing sky or to look at the buildings outlined by bright moonlight. Finally, in junior high school, I started writing. I used to write a lot, just sit down and write a story. I don't know what for. Nobody would see it but me. I would just write it, and then read it to myself. I'd read these stories over and over again. I remember a short story I wrote for an English teacher that was supposed to have a surprise ending, a story about a little boy whose father was a doctor. I set it all out and had fun writing it.

"I could always read and write well in school. I guess that's because I always liked books. I can remember in first and second grades, they would have nursery rhymes that I would read and read. I'd take the books home and bring them back in a paper bag because we weren't supposed to take them home. My sister began taking me to the library and got me my own card. I'd go to my room and close the door and stay there. I wouldn't go outside like the other kids did. I'd just go into my room and read and listen to music. I've always kept on reading. I used to go into a bookstore and stand for as long as an hour and a half reading a book until I felt uncomfortable staying in there so long."

Why didn't someone know about his interests in reading? Who could have encouraged him with his writing in earlier years? What could happen now to rectify these past omissions in his life? The prognosis for academic strides at present was poor. Curtis, at eighteen, was sitting in classes with students much younger. He was caught in the bind of finding himself fighting for new ways in the same place where he had failed. The mileage to catch up on course credits was great enough to defeat motivation. Yet, he had demonstrated that he could not give up his intellectual and writing interests.

Perhaps other avenues could be explored for answers to concrete needs at this time. First, Curtis needed money. As an eighteen year old living at home, he was expected to contribute to the family income. Through community contacts, Mr. Johnson and I were able to arrange for a tutoring job for Curtis. He worked with junior high students on writing and reading skills. He had a touch with them, but transportation again proved a problem. The bus strike was longer in duration than we had expected, and the three-quarters of an hour walk in a different direction from home and school was discouraging. The job helped for a while but was not a satisfactory solution.

The next avenue for exploration was for Curtis to consult with the school social worker. Mrs. Powell was known for her understanding of the pressures many of the students in the school were under. Curtis responded to the idea; she became captivated by the depth of his sensitivity and the quality of his humane values. Her own desire to see him succeed was intense. Mrs. Powell and I touched base frequently, trying to figure out avenues and alternatives for him. One response of our relationship to Curtis came from Curtis' mother. She was appreciative and interested in our various concerns for him. When an excellent job opportunity for her arose, she contacted Mrs. Powell and me for recommendations. After she had the job, she not only felt grateful for our assistance but also was able to relieve some of the financial pressure on Curtis.

Couldn't Leave Him in Midair

The academic year was wearing on, however, and certain decisions could no longer be avoided. Miss Coles brought to my attention an important consideration. If the Independent Study Program for gifted and potentially gifted students was going to develop the potential of students formerly uninterested in an academic future, and if these students now wanted to go on to college but lacked the background, what course could they follow? What responsibility did the program have for suggesting future directions? Miss Coles was concerned not only about Curtis but about Wayne, another student of mine. He was a senior and graduating; he wanted somewhere to go to prepare himself for college. Before coming into the program, he had been turned off academically; now he was turned on. We couldn't leave him in midair. Something had to be done.

We explored various ways to answer the need, but the route a former student of mine had taken was the one that looked best. A major university had a transitional year program on its campus for students like Curtis and Wayne; it prepared students for college with all expenses paid. We gathered the information necessary from the director of this program and requested an interview. Letters of recommendation were, of course, part of the request. Curtis asked Mrs. Herndon to write one of the letters for him. He knew

that having a former probation officer write such a letter might be risky in revealing his past, but his high regard for her prompted his decision.

Because I was putting together the application folders, I was privy to the letter Mrs. Herndon wrote for Curtis. It was complete with the details significant to the director. I was impressed with her knowledge, insights, and tone of admiration for this young man. Certain phrases and sentences stood out: "Curtis outlined just what steps he could take to change the course of his life. . .and did all these things, demonstrating an inner strength that I can admire, and not explain."

After her description of him in one section, she added: "He is, simply, a delightful person to know. He is a great story teller—with a keen eye for details—a fine sense of irony, and a very good sense of humor."

This sense of humor came out sharply on the trip back from the interview at the university transitional-year program. It was the first time I became aware of it. Both Curtis and Wayne were relatively quiet on the hundred-mile drive to the interview. This silence was not too surprising for such a new experience. Driving back, they were full of spirited fun. To my surprise, both young men, pensive to all outer appearances at school everyday, had the touch of a Bill Cosby in them. Their anecdotal dialogue was about their experiences with children in tutoring, and on the playground, and the need to be firm with them at first and then friendly. A reversal always brought disaster, they said.

In the interview, Curis and Wayne had respected the authoritative tone of Mr. Howell, the director of the university transitional year program, as he described the hard work and responsibilities they would face, if they were to enter the program. Former students of the program, who were now in the university, were at the interview, also, and stressed strongly the need for disciplined work in this academic setting and the need to deal with the distractions on any university campus. Wayne's and Curtis' humorous tales reflected their respect towards these men and a certain sense of identity with them taken from their own experience with young persons. I was impressed with their attitude and happy that they seemed relaxed now that they had seen this program and met these people. Such exuberance indicated that this glimpse of a "real" future made a big difference to them.

Asked To Be Withdrawn from School

Once back in the daily routine, Wayne delved deeply into a research project, and Curtis started attending school more frequently. However, the inevitable for Curtis happened. The administrator responsible for his attendance in the classroom asked that he be withdrawn from the school on the basis of the raw statistics. Mrs. Powell, through the administration and the director of guidance, requested a special committee meeting to review the question. Such a committee was not extraordinary; this situation was. With her efforts and the wise chairmanship of the director of guidance, the committee decided to allow Curtis to attend school under arrangements to which he agreed. Since Curtis would need assistance in his new directions, I looked for an outside professional consultant who might provide a supportive relationship for him apart from school and home. Mr. Harris was discovered, again through resources in the community. He not only provided a listening ear, but also a certain understanding in an informal, interested manner that, I think, meant much to Curtis.

The interview with the entire admissions committee of the university transitional year program occurred shortly after the special committee meeting. Mr. Gates, a staff member in the Program in our high school, drove Wayne and Curtis to the campus. Over a long period of time, Mr. Gates had enjoyed discussions with Curtis about literature and was excited now about the possibility for future plans. He returned from the trip with encouraging news. The admissions committee was impressed with Curtis' writings in spite of his shaky academic credentials. Wayne seemed to be in good stead.

However, the outlook turned desperate when I called Mr. Howell, the director of the university transitional program, several weeks after the trip. Miss Coles had asked me to find out about Wayne's chances, in case other college possibilities should be investigated. The university said Wayne would probably be accepted; Curtis was on the waiting list. However, the final decision of the committee was yet to be made.

Curtis disappeared again in despair. Mr. Harris and I consulted; Mr. Johnson and I discussed the situation. Miss Coles, Mrs. Powell and I met and shared numerous cups of coffee. It was finally Curtis himself who gave us renewed hope. At school one day, he dropped into the library. Inadvertently, I asked him if he had done any writing. Out of his pocket, he pulled a piece of paper with a long poem on it. As I read it, I could feel new sources of strength in myself. He had described what he was going through now in terms of feeling locked into himself, where no one could reach him. By the end of the poem, he expressed the insight that, in this experience, he was beginning to reach into the depths of himself. Here he realized that the present struggles were part of life and would pass. The torturous grip of successes and setbacks was loosening.

Shortly after that, Curtis heard Melvin Van Peebles, the Black playwright of "Don't Play Us Cheap," at the University theatre in town. Curtis sat with some of us from the Program and did not say much, but reacted to Van Peebles' talk with a mixture of seriousness and light-hearted laughter. Later, he said he wanted to read some plays by Van Peebles, and about the man himself. He was inspired with the integrity and open honesty of the playwright, qualities he himself had been struggling to attain.

Soon after that evening performance, I received a message to call Mr. Howell at the university transitional year program. Wayne was with me in the library at the time. Both of us practically ran to Miss Coles' office to make the call.

"I would like to tell you that we have decided to take both Wayne and Curtis into the program for next year." Mr. Howell said with satisfaction. "I thought you would be happy to know. Of course, they will receive formal acceptances in the mail."

I listened in disbelief, mingled with a sense of relief. After a long pause, I expressed my own delight. The director asked me to follow through on some important details with the young men for the fall. One detail was to have Curtis take the equivalency tests on a trial basis; another was to have both students bring earnings from summer jobs for spending money. A third item was to guide Wayne and Curtis toward colleges for admission after the transitional year program. The young men were to bring catalogs and applications with them. Our summer activities were outlined for us and a major milestone had been reached in Curtis' journey.

Explored College Catalogs

Shortly after the news, Curtis' irregular educational stride changed to a steady march. He initiated the task of finding and studying the equivalency test book. When he described to me what he was doing, his voice was enthusiastic. He then explored some college catalogs with me in the school library; we wrote to those centered on the independent study and small seminar approach. Several answered saying that they did accept students with equivalency credentials. He hunted diligently for a summer job in a year of low-level employment. Finally through a contact with a former teacher at the high school, we arranged a job at a near-by gasoline station. Curtis continued in the summer session of the program informally, with the math member of our staff, Dave Palmer, a recent college graduate who was sensitive to Curtis' stuggles. At this time, Curtis had taken all the equivalency tests except math and had passed them; he prepared with Dave for his last hurdle to the equivalency of a high school diploma. He passed the math and attained a high school diploma.

He continued his writing and reading with me. An article in the *New Yorker* magazine on Edward Bullins, another Black playwright, had stimulated his curiosity about Bullins' plays. After reading several, Curtis started another play of his own. He wrote one main scene and sketched out the rest. He worked on a descriptive essay on ghetto life. After attending a small supper party for some Program staff and a former student who had attended the university transitional year program, he recorded his responses to the conversations in two new poems.

At various sessions of the summer program Mr. Harris noted the relaxed outgoingness of Curtis and remarked, "If this is what can happen to a person, every step is worth it. We must plan on driving up to see Curtis and Wayne next year." We knew we would keep in touch.

The following is a description of Curtis after his acceptance by the university transitional year program. His attendance at school had not improved particularly; however, it was too late in the school year to withdraw. His mind was completely occupied with responses to every letter from Mr. Howell—everything from signing a meal contract to selecting his course schedule. A fork in the road for him had been approached and his path had been chosen. Where this path will lead cannot be described at present; it is still in the future. What is most important is that his Journey will continue on a new path, in a different program, at another place, with new guides.

When I evaluated Curtis' work in our Program, the intuitive reaction I had experienced in our first interview suddenly was explained. The sense of self and his inner directedness were rooted in specific goals. More so than many of my students, Curtis had spelled out his desires concisely—to write a play, to read several books he had on a mental list, to expand his collection of poetry, to go to college, and finally, to affect many people. He had fulfilled them all to some degree in our Program.

"To affect many crowds," his phrase, captured my thoughts as I wrote the evaluation. Numerous people had met Curtis on this Journey; many side roads had been explored. A classroom teacher, who had been unsuccessful in reaching Curtis, investigated the special approach of our Program to understand its success. Impressed with the individualization, she went back to her classroom with new techniques. Several students remarked, later on, about her success with them. Six students from the drama group signed up and were accepted in the Program. Mr. Harris, after learning about our Program through his work with Curtis, became so enthusiastic about it that our staff asked him to do future consulting work. Various examples kept crossing my mind, including my own experience.

What had this Journey meant to me? In traveling this route, Curtis had forced me to look at myself and my society as I had never done before. Books on education, sociology, and psychology could not substitute for this experience with a living person. Curtis is not "just another face in the crowd." He has "affected many crowds." His quality of engaging people in an encounter with human life will continue through his writings and through "just being a certain type of person."

"A Journey with Curtis" is ended; another journey *for* Curtis begins.

Postscript

Curtis finished the transitional year program and continued his studies for two years at a four-year liberal arts college. During this time he became intersted in photography and remained excited about literature and writing. Last summer he had the opportunity to be an intern at the morning newspaper of his city. Several of his photographs, as well as news articles, appeared in the paper. The editor remarked to him that he not only stated the facts of an event but also captured the feelings of a situation when he wrote about it. He hopes to continue work this summer with the newspaper and to transfer his two years of college credit to a local college.

Chapter III

A PORTRAIT OF WILLIE: VIEWS FROM THE LIBRARY – A GIFTED STUDENT

"You will really like the sophomore I have in my chemistry class right now. I want to work with him in independent study next year," said Mr. Boger, advisor of science students in the Independent Study Program and a classroom teacher. He spoke to me, as the Coordinator of the Program, with distinct pleasure about his student: "He listens to lectures, without taking a note or raising a question, and ends up with tests of 100's. He 'turned on' to chemistry this year; he would like to keep going. Wait until you meet him."

In further description of his student, Mr. Boger recounted that Willie Sessions had entered the chemistry class his sophomore year quietly and unobtrusively. Sitting in a desk in the second row to the far right, he intently watched his teacher at the blackboard and listened alertly to the lectures. When Mr. Boger directed questions to Willie, the student shrugged his shoulders as if he did not know the answers. Mr. Boger asked him to bring pencil and paper to class to take notes; Willie only brought in a scrap of paper and a stub of pencil. When Mr. Boger gave the first test, Willie made 100%.

Did Figuring in his Head

Mr. Boger realized then that Willie did not need paper and pencil to figure or to remember information; he did the figuring in his head and retained the material in his mind. The teacher said, "It's really for selfish reasons that I want him in Independent Study, I suspect. I've never encountered a student like him. For me it will be a stimulating challenge. For him, I think the world will be the limit."

Willie applied for the Independent Study Program that spring. When he took the required aptitude tests for the Program, he looked relaxed. He wrote answers quickly on each section, waiting patiently for the next section to begin. I felt at the time that his composure came from confidence, not a cover for confusion as with some students. Test scores in the high percentiles confirmed my feelings. With these scores, fine recommendations, special academic interests, and an intelligent interview, Willie qualified and entered the Program in the fall of his junior year.

His ISP work with Mr. Boger in advanced chemistry went well. Along with his studies, he attended a science symposium and a Saturday morning lecture series for high school juniors at Yale University.

During the year, Willie also participated in a Big Brother program for elementary school children. This was an ISP project, set up by one of the social studies students I advised, with some of his football teammates. When this student discussed his Big Brother program with me, I saw a more vivid picture of Willie. "He's reliable," the student said. "He keeps his commitment. Even though Willie is quiet, and the fourth grader he is working with is shy, the child is really coming out of his shell. It is beautiful to see."

Another beautiful aspect to see was Willie in the library. As I watched him from my base of operations, I felt as if I were watching the weaving of a design. Usually, students came to the library on a regular schedule and followed predictable patterns. Willie came into the library at different times, sat in different places, and did different things. I found myself absorbed in observing his self-propulsion. He picked his spot in the library for that particular period, spread out books in front of him, or read a newspaper or browsed through the reference section.

He always appeared immaculately dressed, usually with an attractive turtleneck shirt and good looking trousers. Five foot, eight inches in height, lean and muscular, he moved with the quickness and tensile strength of an athlete. When in conversation with him, I felt his eyes penetrated me with sharpness and depth. His handsome facial features were composed and concentrated. In moments of serious reflection, Willie reminded me of a line from a Carl Sandburg poem:

> "A soul came to me
> Out of the look on a face."

I envied the advisor working with him.

When fall came, things changed. Since Mr. Boger had been appointed an administrative intern, Willie had a new advisor, Mr. Mayes. The plans for Willie's project with Mr. Boger were erased and Willie's laboratory work awaited Mr. Mayes' new schedule. Therefore, Willie's first two periods were free. He sat in the reference section of the library those periods; he studied but the old intensity was missing. He looked as if he were waiting for something to start.

When Mr. Mayes and I conferred, I discovered that before becoming a chemistry teacher he had been a research chemist at Olin Industries, a major industry close to the high school. Mr. Mayes hoped that Willie might work in the labs in Olin's

Research Center the first two periods of the morning. Mr. Mayes and Olin research chemists kept the telephone busy scheduling the possibilities for Willie's placement.

Aware of His Absences

For a short period, Willie's attendance became mercurial. As the homeroom teacher for the ISP students in the library first period, I was aware of his absences. I also became anxious since I was responsible for coordinating his senior year schedule. He needed the challenge of the lab work everyday.

One day I learned that Willie was injured during a game and was at home with strained leg ligaments. He would be out of school for some time so I called. His spirits seemed fine, but he admitted some pain. He was reading a book from the library, *Carbon Chemistry*, and doing other work.

An exciting event took place while he was out; Mr. Mayes received the call for Willie's work in the lab. He would go directly to the Research Center at eight in the morning and remain until ten. After checking his attendance with me, he would go to his chemistry class. Mr. Mayes could catch up on Willie's morning activities at Olin just before the lectures or conferences.

When Willie returned he was quite pleased with the news. One question which I hated to ask him was this: "If you're coming in after ten, how will I know at nine if you're absent or not? The absentee sheet has to go to the office then."

He leaned over the large dictionary on its high stand in the library. He looked at me and simply said, "I won't be absent." The intensity and sureness of his statement gave me all the assurance I needed. His record at the end of the year was perfect attendance from that day on.

The schedule ran smoothly. Miss Freeman, a former teacher of Willie's sought me out to talk about his plans for college. A visit to Wesleyan University with her and other classmates at the end of the summer interested him. He wanted to apply for an early decision and the deadline was arriving. Perhaps I could remind him of the time schedule, and work on his writing for the essay questions. One weak spot to strengthen for his future studies was self-expression in writing and speaking.

When I spoke to him about his application, he wanted to work on several college applications with me. We set aside two conference periods a week when he did not have his English class scheduled, to work on the details. Another view of Willie took shape in this process.

From the school newspaper I learned that he received special commendation in the National Achievement Scholarship Program for Outstanding Negro Students based on the PSAT scores in his junior year. As his homeroom teacher, I began to receive letters to him from colleges all over the country with application forms. He read them, looked over several catalogs, talked with various people, and selected the four college and university applications he wanted. Overtures from other schools did not faze him once he had settled on his priorites and plans.

Because of the number of details that needed his attention, I made lists for him, but we never needed them. He remembered each item and checked it off in his head. Every time we met, everything for an application would be in order. I used the written lists for myself.

His willingness to write and re-write the personal essays for the applications made our work easy and enjoyable. Each revision took on a polish in technique and expression. In one section, a final essay read, "In football my mind flows and takes everything into consideration in order to make the best attempt to overcome my opponent. . .I'm small, but I try to overcome this by using my mind. In football, my mind and body feel in equilibrium."

I wanted to watch him on the football field someday; I decided to see him in a game when my schedule would allow.

Summer Reading List Intrigued Me

His summer reading list, requested by the colleges, intrigued me as a teacher in the humanities and in terms of his sense of preparedness. He had looked through many calculus books, by Thomas and by Moise, to prepare for the senior year calculus course. At the end of his sophomore and junior years, he read the following books to prepare for his next steps in science, *Out of the Test Tube* by Holmes, *Atomic Physics* by Frich, *Photosynthesis* by Asimiv, and *Your Career in Chemistry* by Esterer.

I found out more about what he was doing every morning from 8:00-10:00 a.m. The Group Leader in the Research Center gave me details in a letter of recommendation for the colleges. Willie was working under the guidance of two supervisors in the Analytical Chemistry Research Department. His duties involved relatively simple qualitative and quantitative analyses using standard absorption spectroscopy and infrared spectroscopy. In addition, he had performed some analytical separations utilizing ion-exchange as well as the preparation of standard reagents.

Mr. Boger pointed out to me that the equipment Willie had the opportunity to use, he himself did not even see until college or graduate school. He felt that no one would benefit better from it than Willie.

The applications were completed by all the deadlines, and before the completion of the process I did get to a football game. I stood on the sidelines of the football field with Mr. Boger, who exclaimed, "Just like in the classroom!" When Willie and the ball were in play, we felt we were watching a "figuring" mind right before our eyes.

During a fourth down early in the first quarter, the Hillhouse defense stopped the opposing team on the thirty-yard line. Expecting a punt ball, the coach called Willie's name to go in and return the punt. Willie came onto the field. After talking with the captain, Willie started going back about thirty yards on the left side of the field. As he turned around, the opposing team was setting up for its punt. As the punt ball came through the air, it headed towards the right side of the field. He streaked across the entire field, picked up the ball and ran down the sidelines for a few yards. With his eye on the ball all that time and his mind giving directions, his body reacted instantly. Willie communicated rapidly with himself.

In another fourth down for the opposing team, with another punt coming up, Willie again was on the field. This time a slight limp appeared; the leg injury still had its effect and kept him from playing the entire game. He went back to receive the punt, again with that look of intense concentration. The punt ball went over his head. He turned around and caught it on the bounce. The opposing team was coming; Willie went straight up the field for about ten yards until he was tackled. He returned to the sidelines limping more noticeably, but the pain did not distract him from his intent.

Late in the game, he went in again to return a punt ball. He looked as if his ankle was really bothering him. However, he appeared alert and focused on one thing, catching that ball. The punt was very high; he caught the ball and fell on it immediately. For a few seconds we wondered why he had not run it. Suddenly, we saw the opposing players right on him. He probably had seen those players coming rapidly towards him when the ball was in the air. If he had run it, he might have lost yardage. His powers of observation were linked with his concentration. "Just like in the classroom!" as Mr. Boger said.

Shortly after the completion of the college applications, Willie filled out the application for the Scholar-Athlete Award sponsored by the New Haven chapter of the National Football Foundation and the Hall of Fame. Mrs. Small, Willie's guidance counselor, suggested that he apply. Through her work with him on transcripts for college, she felt he had a good chance. In the meantime, our scheduled conferences continued. We were working on expansion of the original college essay questions into an autobiography.

On Monday mornings Willie brought his writing to our conference for discussion and polishing. On Tuesday mornings, we sat across from each other at the long library table and talked. I directed questions to stimulate his memories, mainly about his abilities and significant persons in his life.

Sometimes the questions caused him to pause; his eyes looked off into a corner of the room behind me and moved in response to various thoughts. I could see his mind figuring out things. The answers were full, with his own freshness of insight, covered a wide range, and revealed a thought-provoking person.

Takes Things in Stride

In answer to my question, "Were there any experiences that stood out as peaks compared to others in your life?" he answered: "No. I take things in stride. I learned a long time ago to take things in stride and not to worry over failures or successes. Life seems to go smoother, more evenly, that way. I learn from good and bad experiences."

This same message he passed on to the fourth grader he worked with in the "Big Brother" program: "I just tried to help him not to worry. He told me about his problems, and I tried to get him to worry less about things."

"Not worrying" stemmed from respect. He observed when very young how people respected each other: "Respect is the value my family gave me; it is basic in life." Respect is rooted in faith, and trust in oneself and the world, he said. He built on this base a sense of self-mastery. He took stock of himself and any situation before acting or responding.

He said, "Lately, with college on my mind, I've been trying to size up my capabilities and limitations in terms of what is ahead. I find I do better this way. Self-confidence results from this approach. I decided a long time ago, especially around the end of fourth grade, to listen. I listen and learn in any situation. I react differently with different people in different situations. The way I act depends on how I see what's taking place."

Willie explored, experimented with, and discovered these attitudes: "This year in the Research Center I've been experimenting. I like asking my own questions and answering them for myself. That's the real fun of experimenting. I've always enjoyed chemistry for this reason."

Risking, pushing out into life, made Willie aware of his abilities and competencies, but they did not make him feel unusual. "Most people know they have abilities," he said. "The only problem may be when people feel high expectations from others over these abilities. What people said about whatever I had never bothered me; I didn't pay attention. I usually did what I wanted to do and what I was interested in no matter what any one said. I always kept hearing in grade school, 'You have great potential; use it.' I did, if I was interested, or when I had to do something to get to what I wanted. I knew I had to attend school regularly to take the math and science I wanted, for instance."

The striving for excellence, the desire to do his best, seemed effortless for this reason. Even though rarely fully satisfied with his performance, he knew he was doing something for its own sake from his intrinsic interest. This route could be lonely at times. Another route, playing football, brought teamwork and a balance to the solitariness of his other pursuits.

Occasionally, at school, he would stand in the hall, outside the library, talking with teammates or would sit at

a library table discussing the daily sports section with them. "There's more of a sense of support for everyone on a team than there is when someone goes out for his own academic goals. There's a feeling of acceptance that can be missing for people who go on their own, sometimes there's hostility towards the individualist. A team brings some sense of belonging. Everyone's working for the same thing, everyone needs everyone else.

"People need to be in groups. They can learn from other people; they can share and give in a group. The individual, working on his own, is more competitive, with a feeling of being alone. Yet, a person needs to work this way, alone, to explore higher levels of thinking. A different kind of learning and discovering takes place on these higher levels. Being in a group and being on my own come naturally to me. A person needs both," he reflected.

Thought Exploration through Conferences

The exploration of his thoughts that evolved through these conferences reminded me of the descriptive words of a former English teacher of Willie's: "In his papers he digs deeper than others; he always adds dimensions to a topic that brings breadth."

Part of Willie's personality, in action as well as in his words, was expressed in giving and sharing. As I observed ISP students in the library over the year conversing with each other, I noticed Willie working with fellow students at different times on a chemistry solution, or a math problem, or a physics concept.

I heard a student one day in ISP chemistry exclaim, "It's so easy after you explain it!" Willie had worked quietly with her on some of the material from the college textbook they used. Another student in calculus gave a sigh of relief after some problems straightened out in her mind due to his explanations. On another day a student in physics went over a test that they both had taken the previous period.

I asked him one day how he liked helping other students in math and science. His response was a look of completeness; giving was a part of his process.

Another part of his personality showed in his participation in dialogues and in group discussions. An educator who was an elementary school teacher in a gifted program in California visited our program and spoke with several ISP students. Willie and other students speculated about the various meanings of giftedness for several days after this visit.

The Library became a center for an exchange and an exploration of ideas for some ISP students. The informal atmosphere became exciting as college acceptances started arriving. Willie accepted an early decision by Wesleyan University; he withdrew his applications from the other colleges.

Two Yale undergraduates came to talk with ISP seniors around the long conference table in the library about their futures in college. Willie listened and learned.

At other times, Willie and another student would discuss philosophical approaches to life. Only one time did he obviously avoid participation. That was when ISP students presented oral reports on their written projects. Willie did not like to speak in front of an audience, but a day was arriving when that, too, would change.

The announcement arrived that Willie had won the Scholar-Athlete Award, the only student in New Haven to receive it and the first New Haven student to win in many years. The school's student body and faculty rejoiced with pride.

A dinner was held in honor of the 19 award winners in a large restaurant in the area. Each of the winners was expected to give a short speech before the 300-or-more guests at the dinner. Willie wasn't sure what he would do.

Miss Freeman suggested that she work with him on his speech; he accepted. He admitted his anxiety, worked on a draft for a speech, and then on a re-draft. He came to the dinner with a great deal of nervousness, he told me later.

Yet, as I sat with his family in the large restaurant dining room, packed with people at tables for ten, I looked up at the winners' platform and saw a poised young man in an attractive, off-white suit, amiably talking with the person to his left. He seemed to be enjoying himself, but I wasn't sure.

The master of ceremonies endlessly introduced the adult celebrities and, at last, came to the introductions of the scholar-athletes. Willie Sessions was near the end of the alphabetical list. We listened to many "thank you's" and tributes to coaches, teammates, and parents from the fifteen young men ahead of Willie. The speeches were shorter and simpler, I suspected, than what he had prepared. Some of the young men seemed nervous; others seemed calm.

When Willie's name was called he came to the microphone and stood with dignity and an undaunted look. Willie spoke with directness and simplicity. His remarks were appropriate to the occasion and to the other students' remarks. Whether or not he had prepared differently, he sized up the event, the people, the situation at hand, and spoke to them. His last words were different from any of the other speeches: "I accept this award in the name of James Hillhouse High School."

Showed Respect for his School

Willie showed respect for his school by turning his honor over to it. On another night, the students of the school showed their respect for him and gave him the honor back again. At the James Hillhouse High School Awards Night,

the science department chairman called the name of the winner of the Bausch-Lomb Award for the top science and mathematics student in the school: Willie Sessions. As he came forward to the stage to receive his award, several students stood up. Soon everyone in the auditorium was standing and applauding. That was the first time I had seen such an ovation on this occasion. It was spontaneous, initiated and supported by his peers.

As Willie once said, "Respect is basic in life." Beneath Willie's respect was a foundation of faith, hope, and will. Just before graduation, Mr. Gadsden, the English advisor seemed quite satisfied and happy as he put a paper in front of me on my conference table. "A Philosophical Examination of Life through Science, Philosophy, and Literature" by Willie Sessions.

"This is it. It's finished," he said. The paper represented the year's work in English for Willie. It represented the dialogues, the exchange of ideas, the expression of thoughts, and the searching that went on between student and advisor.

Mr. Gadsden and I conferred occasionally about Willie's papers. In English, his work was on research papers; with me, his work was on the autobiography, "While Waiting." The three of us had talked together about the autobiography after it was finished, and now I was excited to see this paper and talk about it, too.

As I read it, I knew that it was more than a research paper. It was a philosophical statement and also an open-ended search. Willie had started out his year in English with the topic "Science and Literature." With a reading of Poe's "The Tell Tale Heart," which focused on man's mental disorders and the supernatural, Willie went on to find a definition of literature. Artistotle's *Poetics* was selected which led to his source, Plato. Plato's work led to Socorates. After his initial investigation, Willie decided to work on scientific explanations of creation and the Biblical accounts. This endeavor finally led to reading works by the scientist Jesuit priest, Teilhard de Chardin.

The research paper reflected his thoughts on creation and the destiny of humankind. Although the paper worked out many of his ideas, Willie said he was not fully satisfied. He wanted to work through the various ideas more until he felt that he was expressing his own rather than those of the sources he used for the research.

After graduation, he came to school on his lunch hour from Olin's Research Center. He was working there in the chemical library full-time on a summer job. He showed Mr. Gadsden another draft of the paper. Since Mr. Gadsden was about to leave school for his own summer job, he suggested to Willie that he finish it with me in our ISP summer program.

Every Monday and Wednesday at 12:15 Willie came to school on his lunch hour. We worked together, exploring and reading. I showed him a literary review of Buckminister Fuller's new book, *Synergetics*. This interested him so I brought the book in for him to take home. Instead, he picked it up, sat down at a desk, and became engrossed. That day we had little time to confer. Next, he brought in Teilhard de Chardin's *The Phenomenon of Man*, a book Miss Freeman lent him. The more we talked, the more I knew that he was reaching out into higher realms of original thinking.

His paper, a product of his own creation, was finished the week the summer program ended. "The Destiny of Humankind" reflects the writer—a young man with faith in humankind, the future, in a Creator, and in himself as a participant in the destiny of humankind. In his description of the society he envisioned for the future, he states in his paper: "We will be able to reach out, to touch and to discover." He concludes, in part, with "love will be our eyes; we will see the soul."

Over these few years, my eyes saw a life reaching out, touching, and discovering, with an integrity of mind and spirit ever expanding and ever exploring.

While Waiting
by
Willie Sessions

The Scholar-Athlete Dinner for the 19 scholar-athlete award winners is the focus for Willie Sessions' autobiographical sketch. The concept is based on the questions directed to him in his conferences: about his abilities, memorable experiences, and the significant persons in his life.

Here I am sitting in this room waiting with the other award winners for the dinner to start. What's really on my mind? My speech is all prepared to be given when I accept my Scholar-Athlete Award, thanks to Miss Freeman. I'm glad I skipped my research work at Olin's this morning so I could go to her first period class and have her check it to make sure it was all right.

I tried not to think about my speech when I came to the Ambassador with my parents, but I couldn't help myself. Coach Barbarito did right when he told me to calm down. I erased all thoughts until I came to this room where the winners are talking together before the dinner.

New thoughts are starting to crowd my mind. The question of why I'm getting this award can only be answered from a combination of past events in my life.

In fact, one past event comes to mind right now. Mark Woods, from Maloney High School, is sitting next to me talking about the Maloney-Hillhouse game. He's saying my touchdown in the game was pure luck; he couldn't believe it.

The play was really run perfectly; everything went right from the minute Raphael, our quarterback, called the play. "Wing left, sprint right, 20 Fly, 90 Flag on two, ready break."

I was to run straight down the field for a bomb. After the first twenty yards, I was open; I looked back. Raphael threw the ball. All I could think about was catching it; I caught it and ran the remaining five yards for the touchdown, my first of the year.

That was the only touchdown of the game. We won 8-0, our first victory for Hillhouse that season. After the game, a reporter interviewed Raphael and me. I didn't think the victory was that big a deal; we hadn't played up to our potential, but we did win and the victory felt good.

Football has meant much to me, and it is a major ingredient in my life when I stop to think about it. When the day comes when I have to stop playing, I'll always have the beautiful memories of playing with friends and the relaxing feeling of knowing the personal interest that my past coaches had in me.

My first coaches, in the Albie Booth League that I played with in the ninth grade, were supportive and encouraging. I know at first I was a little nervous about playing but not scared, because I wanted to play.

I look back at that first game of the season with the League as a start in my football life. Near the end of the first quarter, our quarterback called my play, "1 right, 40 reverse," Coming out of the huddle, I went to my position. The play started; I came around the back of the line. I could see the quarterback wanting to give me the ball so I moved a little faster. I took it, turned the corner, and ran. Before I knew it the play was over with a gain of twenty-five yards; my nervousness disappeared. I ran back to the huddle thinking, "Twenty-five yards, not bad, but not good enough."

Later in the same game, I took the ball for a second time and scored a fifteen yard touchdown. Minutes later I scored again. I played a flawless game that day. I was pleased, but then things changed.

The change came in the All Star game at the end of the year. Since I had made first string in the Albie Booth League, I was eligible to play in the All Star game. I knew at the time that the most valuable player would get a trophy. I wanted to win it.

The game started. I ran the ball eight yards and on the second run, another eight yards. On my third carry, I ran about four yards; then about three guys had me. I broke away, ran four more yards and got tackled on the side-lines.

Suddenly someone ran over me and stepped on my calf. That was it! A bone had cracked, and I couldn't play the rest of the game. What a break! No chance for that trophy. That feeling is still with me.

My season was good, overall, for someone who was small, 120 pounds. I didn't think I could ever play football on a regular team, but my friends kept encouraging me by saying, "Willie, you know, cream always rises to the top." They seemed to put my ability over size.

When I think about it, I learned a lot from the Albie Booth League. In my second year, I was made captain. I learned that people not only follow a captain by what he says to them, but also by how he performs on the field.

Performance, putting forth your best at all times, that's what Coach Pete Barbarito of Hillhouse instills in his players. He gets his players to perform because of the kind of guy he is. He'll joke with you, then become serious at the right time. He understands his football players and their problems. Everyone respects him, no matter what he says or does. Perhaps the best description of him would be a lion who is proud and strong. He is also a man who fits the real definition of a man, and he spurs on his players to be real men.

He spurred me on from my first days of football in high school. I remember in the spring of my sophomore year

when our team had the blue and white game, a scrimmage between all players, the starters had to play first and then the backups. At the time I was third string running back. They were hitting hard. In fact, there wasn't a touchdown scored on the ground until the coach said, "Willie, come into the huddle."

It was near the end of the scrimmage, and I knew I would run the ball. In the huddle I remember our quarterback calling the play, "Wing left, 347 sweep."

I thought to myself, "This is it."

As the huddle broke, I could hear the defense saying, "Sessions is going to run it." I got more nervous. As the play started, I received the pitch, turned upfield, then to the left, then upfield again. I went all the way, 60 yards and no one touched me. Coming back to the coach, I heard him say, "Good job, Willie. I'll give you another chance in a minute so you can rest."

They ran another play; then as the coach was getting ready to call me, it started to rain. Barbarito said, "Let's go upstairs; practice is over."

That day was the last practice until August. I went through that summer with the thought of that touchdown and the coach's pat on the back in my mind; I hoped I would play more during the season. I did.

Mr. Barbarito was also the track coach. I wanted to run track my first year in high school. The first words he had said to me when I met him were, "I'm glad to have you, but you've got to stick to it."

I wanted to run the 1000 yard dash. Barbarito told me to run the half mile; so I ran the mile in practice to get ready for the half. After a few weeks we had an indoor meet at Cox Cage, Yale's indoor track. I ran the 1000 yard run. Since I wasn't experienced, I ran as if I were running the quarter mile. I sprinted too early so I got tired. I almost caught the guy in first place, but I ran out of gas.

Mr. Barbarito, in his usual joking way, said, "Willie, that Oldsmobile ran out of gas."

He knew when to joke; he knew when to be serious. Coach Barbarito. . .it's going to be hard to forget him. . .just like it's hard to forget Kenny Gray, a friend of my brother's and then a real friend to me. He got me started in sports really, all kinds of sports. He was always like a second brother to me, teaching me the basics in things like football. He was always my teammate. We always won. I was only five years old when I met him, but I was impressed then that he knew plenty about the game of football.

Kenny, my brother, and I did other things together. We went fishing, rode bikes and a whole list of things. We had a bicycle club, I remember. To be in this club, a person had to be a trick rider, but the initiation was going down a hill on a bike. The hill had a tree on the left side and a rut in the middle. The path was filled with rocks and was very steep; all these obstacles made steering impossible. Kenny went down more than anyone else so he was the leader. I went down Devil's Hill more than anyone besides Kenny. It took a lot of nerve to go down more than once.

My younger days of playing sports with Kenny will always be next to my heart. They were the starting point for years to come in athletics and my love for them. I guess that's why I keep thinking about the sports in that summer camp I went to when I was twelve years old. If it hadn't been for Kenny, maybe that summer wouldn't mean so much to me now.

I remember feeling nervous when I arrived at the summer camp in Milford and was waiting with a group of other boys to get picked up by our counselors. When this time period was over we went into our cabins and got settled. It was enjoyable meeting many new people.

The routine for the day made the time go fast. First, it was to get up, clean our cabin and eat. Every day a cabin won the award for being the cleanest. We never won, but our cabin was always clean.

Breakfast was even a more memorable occasion. My friend, Murphy, from my cabin was always finding something in his breakfast like paper, tin, and other things. One day he didn't feel like eating, and I took his peach pancakes. As I was eating them, I found a piece of tin in one. I told him and he laughed; he said he wasn't eating breakfast anymore. I didn't blame him!

Later we usually went swimming; sometimes I'd go and other times I would read a book. Then we had lunch which was pretty good. Afterwards we played a variety of different sports and had crafts until 4:30, then back to swimming again. Sometimes we would play tackle football. I remember making most of the touchdowns on our team; we lost, though, because the other team had better players. Sometimes we would play basketball, baseball, sometimes go hiking and fishing.

When we had arts and crafts, I hated to do the work. Swimming after that time and the period just before dinner were good. After dinner we would have a get-together of some sort. We went to bed at 9:00.

One of the get-togethers after dinner I'll never forget; it was a wrestling night. Everyone picked his partner during the day. After bouts, the big one came. A kid named Homer, who went to the camp a number of years, was the best so he beat the other kid even though it was a tough match. That night after the match, I was wrestling two other guys because they thought I couldn't wrestle since I hadn't wrestled in the matches. I took them both on at the same time and beat them; then Homer, who was in our cabin, came in. We wrestled. I easily beat him, even though he was the champ.

The final get-together, which met the last night in camp, was awards night. The night went on and on with awards being given out for the cleanest cabin, fishing, arts and crafts, basketball, football, and others. I was kind of worried because I didn't get anything until finally I heard my name called. The last award was being announced. I won it. It was the "best athlete in camp" award.

I was and still am the proudest of this award, more than any I have ever won.

Another awards night does stand out in my mind, though, the Hillhouse Academic Awards Night last year, my junior year. The three awards I received represented a challenge, a surprise and a subject I grew to like.

I knew that the prize exam for the Algebra III and Trig Award was supposed to be tough, but I kept in mind that the math class that year was a breeze. It was mostly review, easier than my Algebra II class in my sophomore year. In thinking about the challenge, I figured out a few facts: I won the Algebra II prize exam sophomore year, I wanted to win this Algebra III prize exam in my junior year, and the other students in the class thought I'd win it because I always scored high on tests, even though I never brought books and paper to class. I took the exam. Although I left it with mixed feelings (I would win; I wouldn't win), I knew my nearest competitor had the same feelings and only time would give the result.

Math comes easily to me and always has. The teacher in seventh grade had to keep me supplied with workbooks, I remember. We all had workbooks that were supposed to last six months, but I finished mine in a month or so. The teacher would give me another one as soon as I finished. This cycle of getting the workbook, working on it, receiving a new one right away went on and on.

I work out problems quickly in my head. Figuring out in my mind is a method I've always used. One time in eighth grade, my math teacher put a math problem on the board. Right after he put it up, I gave him the answer. He said, "I don't believe it!" Then he worked out the problem on the board; my answer was right. Later, he wanted to know how I did it so fast. I told him simply, "I don't know." The process seems natural to me; I don't know really how or why.

I wasn't surprised on Awards Night when I won the Algebra III and Trig Award. What really surprised me that night was the fact that I won the U.S. History prize exam award. I took the exam after being recommended by Ms. Freeman, my U.S. History teacher. The exam was to write a few paragraphs on different topics. I chose violence because I'm strongly against it. My ideas and expression must have been better than I thought. It's good that Ms. Freeman encouraged me to take the exam. She's certainly a kind and understanding woman, a friend at all times. She knew that I dreaded doing the speech for tonight and offered to help me. I'll never forget that experience of working on something I dreaded to do.

A third award that same night, the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Award for excellence in science and math, was one that two years ago I never would believe that I could win. In my freshman year, I told myself I would never take chemistry. How in the world could I ever remember the symbols? The only compound I ever knew was water; it was H_2O. Now I look back and say, "Things aren't always what they seem."

I had Mr. Boger, who did a great favor for me. He turned me on to chemistry. At first in that class, when I really wasn't into chemistry, I think he saw that I had potential, but that I wasn't motivated enough. Many times I knew the answer, but I responded with the reply, "I don't know," and gave him a smile with my answer. This exchange went on for the whole year. I'm sure he knew I knew the answer because my tests were always good. At the end of the year, he wanted me to take the prize exam. I accepted the offer, but I knew it would be hard. It was hard, but I had a way of figuring out problems without much knowledge of the material. I finished it thinking, "I didn't do well enough." I knew I hadn't studied before the exam. I didn't go to Awards Night that year because I didn't feel like rehearsing for it, but I heard that I came in second. The next day Mr. Boger handed me my award; he told me I only lost by two points. I knew if I had studied, I could have won.

In my junior year in chemistry, again with Mr. Boger, my involvement increased even though the course was a continuation of the basic chemistry course. It was called Advanced Chemistry and was offered through the Independent Study Program. That year was one of understanding mainly the broad field of chemistry.

I started by reading many different books in the subject and looking up different information just to get a feel for chemistry. I went to a Science Symposium at Yale, a two day affair. On the first day, I heard many lectures, none too interesting; on the second day, I saw labs and heard more lectures. (It was during the middle of spring so that many times I found myself falling asleep). The best part about it was that I met many different people. I also went to a Saturday morning series of lectures presented by Yale professors for ten weeks. This series was interesting, but hard to understand in most cases.

Science has been interesting this year because I have the ability to see concepts clearly. Also, going over to Olin Industries Research Center every morning from 8:00-10:00 is different because it's in private industry. The lab work there started out easily, then it got harder, but I usually understand what is going on. I have the chance to perform many experiemnts like analysis of active chlorine in Olin's HTH water purifer. I did the analytical work in Ion exchange;

I analyzed detergents of many different companies, and I used two expensive machines which cost in the range of $20,000 and up, the atomic absorption machine and the gas chromatography machine.

Most of the year was spent in the urethane rigid foam section working with a chemical engineer. He taught me some of the concepts of foam making. Now I can make my own foam with precision; I perform my own experiements. With a little more training, I could be a technician there if an opening ever came up.

Many mornings after my work at Olin's I would discuss with Mr. Mayes, (my organic chemistry teacher in ISP who set up the Olin research for me), what I did that morning in the lab. I began to realize that although science was once obscure to me, now I could understand and relate many scientific concepts. Perhaps some day I'll become a research chemist.

The award for science and math my junior year did indicate some of the new directions I was taking. In my senior year, I had to describe these directions on my college application.

I heard that it was tough to do more than one college application. Since I hadn't decided definitely where I wanted to go, I began thinking about Wesleyan, Amherst, Yale and R.P.I.

Last summer, Ms. Freeman drove me up to Wesleyan to visit it. She went to graduate school there, and one of her friends was an assistant admissions director. Also, I learned later that Mr. Gadsden, my English advisor in ISP, graduated from there. Since we thought much alike on several things, I wondered if the kind of college he went to might be the kind I would want, too.

Even though I hadn't seen Amherst, everyone heard about the reputation that it carried. I heard that it had one of the finest athletic-academic combinations around. Of course, everyone knew the reputation of Yale; my mother wanted me to go there, but I had to investigate it for myself first. Because I won the R.P.I. Award, I thought about checking out that school. Then there were all the applications coming to me because I won special commendations in the National Achievement Scholarship Program for Black Students. It was based on the PSAT taken my junior year. I received many letters, but I threw them away. I wanted to make my own choice of college. The important thing is going; anywhere I go I know I can adapt to that college.

When I first began working on the applications with the ISP Coordinator, Mrs. Blanning, we started with the Wesleyan application in order to get it out for early decision. It was fairly long, but we finished it in time. The form asked many questions about my personal habits, hobbies, future expectations and my involvement in sports and academics. Next we did the Yale application; I was filling it out more for my mother and friends than myself. I was 90% against going because it was large, in the same city as my home, and I didn't really go for its prestige and reputation. The application was fairly tough, but we finished it in good time.

When I got the Amherst application, it was late in December with a couple of weeks to fill it out. In the beginning of January, I received a letter from the Amherst football coach to come visit. Later I talked to him on the phone. I visited the college one Saturday morning with two other football players from school. When we got there, we decided to stay overnight. Instead of going through the usual routine of seeing the classroom and labs (when you see one science building at a good school, you've seen them all), we socialized with some of the people. For only a day and a night, we got plenty done, but the place didn't really appeal to me that much.

The Amherst application was a breeze to fill out after doing Wesleyan's and Yale's. Each application was easier as we worked on them. The R.P.I. application was the last and easiest. After finishing these applications, I was thinking about what I would do in college. I knew I could tell only when I got there.

Early in January I came home from track practice, opened my mailbox and in it was a letter from Wesleyan. I knew it would tell me if I was accepted. I opened the letter wondering; it said I was accepted to Wesleyan University on early decision. I wasn't really surprised, but I knew that now I would have to send in my letters withdrawing my applications from other colleges. Outside I had been debating where to go to college, but inside I knew I was going to Wesleyan. After a few weeks, I made my decision. I was going to Wesleyan.

Wesleyan is a small college. It has a flexible academic program which will give me freedom. Freedom in school makes me more relaxed; I can feel my body and mind in equilibrium. In my sophomore year, I had an English teacher named Mr. Slen, a great teacher, who had this kind of atmosphere in his English class. He let us sit anywhere in the room; we usually chose what we would work on in class. At the end of the year, he made up a contract with each of us for a term paper. Everyone had a deadline to meet. This set-up made the class more interesting. Almost everyone turned in a term paper that time. I started to do my paper on Japanese myths, I remember, but there wasn't enough information around so I did it on religions. I reached my deadline by a day and earned an A.

If the atmosphere is as open at Wesleyan as it was in this class, and I've heard it is, I expect to perform on a level with everyone else and hopefully higher.

Wesleyan has good relationships among professors and students, also, I understand. Relationships make a difference in learning. When I think about this point, I remember the

number of people who contributed to my way of thinking. I learn something from just about every person I meet. Of course, some influence me more than others. I can think of three especially in this senior year: Mr. Mayes, Mr. Gadsden, and Mrs. Blanning.

Mr. Mayes, my organic chem teacher, is one of the most self-made men I have ever known. I'm impressed by the way he works out things in his mind. He is currently writing a book based on values as interpreted by the individual. This idea is as important as life itself. Other students find him hard to understand, but I know a man when I see one.

Mr. Gadsden, my English ISP advisor, is built along the same lines in thought as Mr. Mayes. At the beginning of the year, when I first met him, he knew I was quiet. He said, "We will develop your ability to express yourself." I think he accomplished what he stated. He helped me to develop my term paper, "Destiny of Mankind." Due to him, I feel a sense of control in my life. I feel I can accomplish all I'm able to and can fulfill my own destiny.

Mrs. Blanning is the type of woman you can describe with many kind words. My mother made a statement to me when I was small which applies perfectly to Mrs. Blanning. My mother said, "Your teachers are your parents away from home." Only a few teachers fit this description; Mrs. Blanning fits it as well as anyone. She's been a driving force behind me. In my opinion, the ISP is in good hands.

Through the years, I've been lucky to meet such people. For this reason, I try to reflect the same attitude towards everyone else.

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It's time to go into the dining room. The time has gone faster than I thought it would. I've been remembering a lot of things while sitting here waiting. Hope my speech goes well when they present me with the Scholar-Athlete Award. I think it will.

Chapter IV

STUDENT PROJECTS

For fuller comprehension of the Independent Study Program and the wide range of able students it seeks to serve, a description of various approaches and several student projects is necessary.

Students tailor their projects to their academic interests and needs with the guidance of subject area teacher-advisors and the use of resources provided through the Program. Like the tailoring of a suit, certain basic requirements have to be met while design and style fall under several options. Weekly conferences, term papers, tests, and seminar reports form some of the basic requirements for ISP college preparatory work. Design and style may be met through the selection of a research independent study course, an apprenticeship arrangement in conjunction with study, a course survey with weekly or biweekly seminar discussions, or through the Independent Learning Experience, a structure of the Program for seniors with highly specialized interests. Detailed descriptions of student work in apprenticeships and in seminars appear in the chapters entitled "Seniors Assist in the Classroom" and "Six Students in a Seminar." Projects in this chapter highlight the work of individuals and the four options open to them.

Harold's Motivation Was Intense

Harold elected one course in Independent Study, social studies, to gain a deeper understanding of urban problems, with housing the first target area for study. Although Harold's academic record was weak, his motivation was intense. His guidance counselor and teachers suspected that he had potential; his parents wondered what was wrong since his two older sisters had graduated in good standing from college. Harold himself wanted to achieve academically.

He commenced his work by reading reports and pamphlets on housing from national sources and local agencies. After some background understanding, he wanted to interview key people in the housing field in the community. He outlined his questions with me as his advisor, made his interview arrangements, and discussed the notes he took during the interviews I arranged for him.

Later he took pictures of houses in various sections of the city. Each picture illustrated one of the problems he was studying, such as run-down and boarded up houses, and empty lots with trash. In his conferences he expressed feelings about what he had observed and later wrote them in lyrical form. After this process of talking and writing, he devised a booklet of his photographs with the poetic descriptions beside them. The booklet was informative and interesting; it acted as a stimulus to Harold to try his hand at writing more often. He began to find a style of his own in learning and expression.

From writing and interviewing, Harold became inspired to read books describing the lives of people in the city. He read Elliot Liebow's *Tally's Corner*, a depiction of street men caught in the complexities of the city, and Piri Thomas' *Savior, Savior, Hold My Hand*, an account of a man who transcended some of the complexities. Enjoying this type of reading, Harold found other autobiographies and biographies of people who grew up in the city, survived its harshness, and gave back to life some of their own vitality. He found fictional stories that captured the nuances of the struggle for survival in the urban setting.

As a result of his work, discussions and writing, Harold increased his awareness of the intricacies of human relationships in their particular social settings. By tailoring his course of study to suit his specific interests, his unfolding questions, and his style of expression, Harold not only grew in this understanding but also in a love for reading, writing, and learning. With this love, his academic work improved. He continued in ISP social studies another year, applied to college, and was accepted at a place where he could continue to study with approaches suited to his needs.

Tom Interested in Kidney Problems

Tom was another student who elected one course in Independent Study. He entered our Program in his junior year with a desire to be a doctor someday. He had a special interest in kidney problems because, in his sophomore year, he had learned about a young girl in California who was going to die because she could not afford the costly treatments of the hemodialysis machine to keep her unhealthy kidney functioning. Tom entered the Program to investigate alternative measures for kidney treatment that would diminish the expense of the machine. He started on experiments with mice. He ordered with exacting specifications, carefuly itemizing materials like special surgical thread. When his mice and materials arrived, funded from the budget item for science equipment in the Program, he carefully investigated his orders. Some were right; some were wrong. We would reorder when wrong. Tom knew what he wanted and was precise in his demands. The $100 spent during the extent of his study seemed part of an investment in the future of a young man who showed promise for his chosen field.

It was a strange sight in the science lab on our third floor to see two mice joined together, one with healthy kidneys, the other without kidneys, to test if a living creature could act as a dialysis machine for another. Tom kept a pair alive for seventy-two hours, an extraordinary length of time according to the latest research.

Encouraged by the ISP Center staff science advisor to write a paper on his work and enter it in a major science competition, Tom wrote a paper entitled "Homogenous Hemodialysis Potentials in Standardized Mice." He submitted it to the "Tomorrow's Scientists and Engineers" contest run by the Humble Oil and Refining Company, and administered by professional educational organizations. Tom was one of the ten selected from over 3000 entrants for an award of a $6000 scholarship. This award contributed to his college education at a major eastern university where he continued his work, refined it, and expanded its directions. Last year he graduated from college and entered medical school.

Through his one course in the Independent Study Program, Tom found resources for his research not only in equipment but also in personnel who had the expertise to guide him. Through his independent study science advisor, he made contact with a kidney specialist at the university hospital and worked with this doctor during his high school and college years.

Harold and Tom show the diverse directions that the selection of one ISP course can take, one with a course of study and one with a specific project. Joe and Sally show what learning takes place when an independent study course is enhanced with an apprenticeship arrangement.

Professor Helps Joe with Oceanography

When Joe came for an interview for ISP science, he was vague and seemed slightly uncomfortable when I asked him what he wanted specifically to study. However, when I asked if he had explored any areas of science on his own, he mentioned marine biology. For several years he had read books on the subject and watched Jacques Cousteau documentaries on television. He detailed the events from the documentaries with a keen observing eye and a sharpness of mind for remembering events. In fact his interest was so strong, he said, that he hoped someday to go to a college with courses in oceanography. To his surpise and delight, he discovered that he could take marine biology in the Program. "I didn't think I could take a course like that now in high school!" he said with enthusiasm. Indeed, he could.

After Joe came into the Program, the science department chairman made an arrangement with a consultant, a professor at a local college who taught a course in oceanography, to work with Joe. The professor had worked with a former student the previous year. Joe met with the professor for consultation and also went on boat trips in the city's harbor for exploratory research. As a junior in high school, he was expanding the horizons he had hoped for in the future.

As a senior, he audited the professor's course and continued to go on the weekly boat trips . On these trips he participated in the work of the day along with the professor's college students and learned about elements in the city's harbor that polluted the oyster population. As a result of his goals and good experience, he applied to a college with courses in oceanography and was accepted.

Sally Works with Mentally Retarded

Sally, when she was a senior, had an entirely different type of apprenticeship arrangement. Once a week she acted as an aide to a teacher of mentally retarded children in an excellent school established in the community for these children. During the arts and crafts period with preschool age children, Sally encountered new experiences in the activities she had to perform and ones foreign to her previous work on the study of mental retardation.

In her sophomore year in ISP science, Sally had studied about the motor skills of retarded children in relationship to her volunteer work with a physically-awkward, mentally retarded child in a large institution. In the first semester of her senior year in ISP social studies, she read about the possible conditions in the environment that might lead to mental retardation. With this background of understanding, Sally wanted to work with a small group of mentally retarded children.

At first Sally spent her sessions at the school observing the children. She took notes on responses to their activities and to the teacher. In her conferences we discussed her observations. After four weeks the teacher asked her to assume some responsibilities. Sally started her work with enthusiasm. She had suggestions to make about the activities with the children, but felt frightened and timid about discussing them with the teacher. With encouragement found in our conferences together, she did initiate some of her ideas. The teacher was so delighted that she asked Sally occasionally to take over the session with the children.

Because Sally took her role seriously, she went to the local library where she took out all the books she could which described activities she might use. She became acquainted with the philosophy and principles behind the use of arts and crafts. She made lesson plans, collected the necessary materials and, after the sessions, took notes on how the children responded to her plans on a particular day.

As her excitement grew, she brought her camera to the school and took pictures of the children when they were involved with the paste, the string and the crayons. Finally, she devised a booklet that could be used by other teachers of arts and crafts with mentally retarded preschool children. In the first section, she described some of the characteristics of the children as a group, and with their individual differences. In the second section she presented the "recipes" for activities that she had used and

designated the degrees of success she had had with each recipe. Some of the activities she had created herself. In the third and final section, she had photographs of the children and discussed the details of her semester's observations of them.

Today Sally continues with her work as she trains to be a teacher in a four-year college in New England. When I last talked with her, she was excited about the fact that many fellow students found her booklet useful in their training with mentally retarded children.

Although apprenticeships enrich the learning experience of students, some subjects need strict attention to a survey study approach. American history is this type of subject when no previous work has been done in it during high school. A basic text and twenty paperbacks by specialists in each era of American history provide the curriculum material. Students study it on their own with requirements about what has to be covered by a certain time. With weekly essay writing and weekly conferences, the students discuss their findings and their interpretations. They encounter a new learning experience through the type of materials they have, and through their own thinking processes.

Barbara Discovers History is Real

Barbara's experience as a junior in the ISP American history course is an example of what can happen when a student becomes engaged with intellectual questions, makes observations, and draws conclusions. As Barbara read the material, discussed it and wrote about it, she learned that history was people—people who behaved wisely or negligently, who were reform minded or power hungry, who made good decisions or poor choices—mainly, people with a mixture of motives who worked out their lives in the grey zones, neither good nor bad.

"This is real!" she remarked one day with surprise. The crucial point of her realization was that she began to sense the complexities not only of people from the past but of people in the present—*her* present. She discussed some of these complexities with me. Before entering ISP, she had planned to go to business school after high school graduation and take accounting courses. Now, she was beginning to wonder if a four-year college might be what she wanted, whether or not she continued with her business accounting. She was becoming aware of her intellect with its own curiosity and needs to be met. However, she also understood that women often had a difficult time socially when they tried to develop their intellectual potential. She herself was beginning to experience difficulties. Could a woman surge ahead with her own educational and career choices and not jeopardize her chances for significant relationships, especially with males? She worked these questions through on her own and made a decision. She would take the risk.

She signed up for ISP psychology in her senior year and started exploring colleges, not only through catalogs but by visiting as many as she could to find out where she wanted to attend. In the second semester of her senior year, a university in the community offered four students in the high school the opportunity to spend the last semester of their senior year in courses on its campus. Because of her class rank, third in the senior class, and her potential, Barbara was one of the students selected. She accepted the offer, maintained her weekly conferences with me and prepared herself for college work. She now attends a large northeastern university that she had selected as her first choice. Her courses and plans still include business accounting, but her life style and goals have changed.

Another survey course which stimulates students' thinking and self-awareness is ISP psychology. Students encounter the theories of personality and socialization expounded by outstanding authorities. Through conferences, weekly essays, and biweekly meetings with a Ph.D. candidate as a consultant, these adolescents enjoy the challenge of understanding dynamics of human behavior and how society affects behavior. While reacting to the basic theories, they test their own thoughts regarding the reality of the world and their own personalities.

Tanya Creates Own Theory

Tanya tested her ideas when it came time to do the first semester term paper. The requirement for the paper was to discuss the theories from the semester's readings around one focus which the students had to choose for themselves. After she received the assignment, Tanya came to her conference and told me what she wanted to do. Unlike the other students in the course whose topics had interesting themes to tie together the theories, Tanya had created her own theory of personality and was going to show how all the other theories followed from her theory.

In her ISP work the previous year, the American history survey course, Tanya had revealed extraordinary conceptual and analytical abilities in her assessment of the dynamics of power—political, economic and social. With an uncanny naturalness, she grasped how power was used, by whom, and for whom. Although her essays showed these abilities, she seemed unable to pull her insights together in original fashion. Now, after one and one-half year's study in survey courses which stimulated her thinking about human actions and reactions, Tanya felt that she had something special to say. She believed that every human being first had to experience a sense of belonging, before the person could realize his or her powers.

"Writing this term paper* and developing my own theory based on my interpretations of the psychology readings was

* See Appendix B, "A Theory of a Sense of Belonging," by Tanya A. Taylor.

one of the most worthwhile things I ever experienced," Tanya wrote on her self-evaluation sheet at the end of the year. The survey courses do enable the students to interact with known authorities in a field and interpret their ideas on the basis of substantial information.

The various options of the Program (survey courses, apprenticeships, and research independent study courses) may be adopted in a senior total curriculum for students with highly specialized interests. By designing academic activities around a particular core interest, the senior can begin to see the interrelationship of ideas and information in various approaches and subject areas. The Independent Learning Experience is the part of the Program in which this type of senior operates.

Peter Does Lab Work

Peter planned to be a pediatrician. His particular subject interests were in biology and chemistry. In his junior year, he took the ISP American history survey course to fulfill his history requirement; through it, he became accustomed to independent work. Owing to his basic interest and plans, Peter and I arranged for the summer after his junior year for his participation in a summer program for high school juniors with six weeks of intensive study and lab work at a nearby boarding school. With this accelerated survey of the fields in which he was interested, he structured his senior year work with an apprenticeship. Six hours a week he was an assistant in an animal biology lab with a doctor who analyzed blood for a better understanding of anemia. Peter helped to evaluate the distribution of iron in hamster tissues. He then went into aspects of microbiology by reading about streptococcus strains and working on gram stains and agar plating.

For his ISP course work in biology, he worked with the ISP Center staff advisor, who had made the arrangements for his lab experience. The advisor suggested books on physiology. In his ISP chemistry course with the classroom teacher-advisor in the high school, he read about antibiotics as part of a larger project on chemotherapy and had the opportunity to work two hours a week in a lab in the chemical research division of a major industry in the city.

English, with literature and creative writing with the Center staff advisor to fulfill his requirement, and Spanish in the classroom to continue his interest in that completed his full schedule. He learned to balance requirements and deadlines in preparation for his college days ahead. He applied to several major colleges and universities and was accepted by all of them. Today he continues his scientific interests at one of the universities and still has plans to be a pediatrician.

Peter, Tanya and Barbara, Sally and Joe, Tom and Harold are adolescents from an urban setting. Their range of academic interests and needs point out the fact that gifted students in any one setting are diverse. Owing to this broad spectrum, the Independent Study Program attempts to offer options which appeal to different types of student styles. The options offer flexibility with sound educational practices. With its approaches, resources and guidance, the Program can influence, to some extent, the future of its gifted students. However, since the projects of the students are the essence of the Program, the students themselves, influence the directions. With this mutual give-and-take, learning becomes meaningful.

The students also may find, through their participation in the Program a sense of belonging. The loneliness of the gifted or potentially gifted student, the loneliness of the adolescent, the loneliness of the city dweller, the loneliness of a talented urban youth may be lessened as he or she pursues intellectual interests along with students similar in abilities and goals.

Chapter V

SELECTION OF STUDENTS

Like any academic admissions committee, the Independent Study Program staff reviews descriptive information on each student considered. Scores from the Differential Aptitude Test (verbal, math and abstract reasoning sections) and from the figural Torrance Creativity Test (indicators of fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration in thinking) give the staff information from standardized tests.

Students who score 90 or above in at least one section of the aptitude test are considered academically talented and gifted. Some of these students may score high on the Creativity Tests; some may not. Several students score high on the Creativity Test but fall short in scores on the aptitude test. These students indicate potential giftedness in creative thinking and expression which the Program can encourage.

Grades (and any available former test measurements) add to the picture of a student's academic life. Some students may score high on the aptitude tests but show poor grades in the classroom. The bright underachiever is eligible for the Program if other information indicates that the student might perform with this approach. Some students have strong grades which suggest high potential but aptitude test scores below their abilities to achieve. Students with high potential, supported by additional information which recommends them for the Independent Study approach, are eligible for the Program.

Grades may fluctuate in subject areas but remain stable and high in the area for which a student has applied. This factor can weigh heavily in a student's favor if other indicators are present to predict the student's success in the Program.

Writing Is Usual Creative Form

Grades and test scores may be weak but take second place in consideration if a student submits concrete evidence of superior work, along with strong recommendations from his counselor and two or more teachers. Since the Program is academic in nature, writing is the usual creative form submitted and assessed.

In combination with test scores, grades, and concrete evidence of creativity, a rating scale on characteristics of giftedness is checked by a classroom teacher in the subject area for which a student has applied. The scale ranks the student's intellectual and creative thinking abilities as well as the student's attitude and style in academic work. Classroom teachers reveal what they have perceived in the students in performance and/or in potential.

Recommendations from counselors, other teachers familiar with the students, and peers add information. All students have interviews with the Coordinator of the Program and with the subject area teacher-advisors. The interview helps the staff to assess the students' interests for independent study: the depth (the length of time the interests have been pursued, the extent and method of pursuit), and the goals for achievement in these interests through the independent study approach and for the long term (college, career, or avocation). Based on the students' commitments, staff interviewers can weigh the prospects for the students' success in assuming responsibility for their work in the Program.

Conversational interviews reveal the types of questions students ask, the keenness of their observations, and sharpness of ideas. Based on these dialogues, staff members can make predictions about the realization of the students' potential through the opportunities and guidance provided in the Program.

An interview form with an interest sheet further reveals the depth of commitment and the intellectual caliber of the student. The interview sheet requires the student to describe the project he or she wishes to pursue and to state answers to questions similar to those raised in the interview.

Know You as a Total Person

The interest sheet calls for a broader statement: "The Independent Study Program wants to know you as a total person. In the space below write a short essay on the interests and abilities that best describe your personality." The written essays indicate the students' ability to write with clarity, organization, and originality. They enumerate the varied interests the students have in and out of school. Finally, they show the students' attitudes towards themselves, others, school, and society. Frequently, the essays of gifted and potentially gifted students take the full space offered on the form; some only write a line or two. Also, these students indicate a number of interests and positive attitudes towards themselves, others, school, and society. Their responses to the interest sheet question, in final analysis, point to one description of the student who qualifies for the Program: alert, open, expressive, enthusiastic about life and learning.

At the end of the interest sheet is a request for the list of books and periodicals the student has read during the past year outside of course requirements. The lists are often lengthy, at times correlated to a high degree with their particular intellectual interests; in other instances, the reading covers a breadth of titles and sources for enjoyment.

By the time the items of information are gathered and placed in individual student folders, the Coordinator and teacher-advisors are acquainted with the students' abilities and interest to the extent that judgments about acceptance or rejection for the Program can be made. Recommendations from the staff, and the student folders, go to the school's Planning and Placement Team for final consideration. Upon approval from this team and upon informing the students, the spring selection process for the coming year is complete.

The process is lengthy in nature and in time. Publicity about the program, orientation meetings for any students interested in exploring the Program and recommendation forms for all counselors, teachers, and administrators start in early March. The end of the process is in mid-May. In these months students learn about the Program and its possibilities for them; staff members learn about the students and their possibilities for extraordinary growth. Through this learning, a solid program can commence in the fall. This procedure is not without some faults and some failures in previous assessment, by both students and staff, but is basically sound.

Chapter VI

THE POTENTIALLY GIFTED STUDENT

In the Independent Study Program, students designated as potentially gifted do not score 90 or above in at least one of the tests from the Differential Aptitude Tests administered during the selection process. However, they do show traits of giftedness according to other criteria. The potentially gifted students may score high on the creativity test; their grades throughout high school years may be honor-roll level. Characteristics checked by teachers on the rating scales may be in the high ranks; recommendations may be strong. Potentially gifted students reveal certain gifted traits in the interview sessions and on the interest sheets with personal essays. In these sessions and essays, strong indicators of their abilities are: the pursuit of interests outside classroom requirements preferably over a long period of time, several activities and hobbies, perceptive questions and keen observations on a topic.

Most Have Consistently Good Grades

Although some students are selected for their potential without a strong academic record to support their acceptance into the Program, most of the students selected at James Hillhouse High School do have consistently good grades. On the teachers' rating scales for the potentially gifted the characteristics checked most frequently in the highest rank are enjoyment of academic activities, persistence, responsibility and responsiveness, concentration, preference for challenge, reasoning ability, independence in work habits, questioning attitude, original thinking, and ability to express oneself orally and in writing. These characteristics may not show up on standardized test results. They are the same qualitites of mind and intellectual interests of those whose test scores do designate them as gifted.

Students without strong academic records may reveal characteristics of the gifted when they are in the classroom or in conversation with their counselors. They may be recommended for the Program because the teachers and counselors think that under the independent study approach these students will come alive academically if they can pursue the interests which make them feel alive intellectually. Further, confidence in one area may affect motivation and confidence in other areas.

Many professional educators and psychologists have written about students who have difficulty realizing their potential. Observation has made us aware of some of the obstacles these students face externally and internally. However, few theorists have spoken about the difficulties faced by adolescents, especially males who reveal extraordinary "sensitivity to people, situations and beauty." Since this sensitivity is hard to assess objectively, it often is overlooked in academic circles as a viable motivating force in intellectual achievement. Yet, these young people may be our potential poets and prophets or those with perceptions about people and their needs. What are they like and how can they be spotted?

These students operate with rich feelings as well as with sharp thinking. Their senses are keen and their responses of awe and wonder to beauty do not diminish after their childhood years. They love the outdoors and enjoy physical exercise and well-being. With uncanny profundity for their age levels, they get to the heart of the matter about people and situations.

They tend to operate according to their own inner time clocks or act, as they sometimes say, when they are "psyched up" for something. They mean that they act when their genuine feelings are involved; it is difficult for them to do otherwise.

They are loners in their ability to respond to their inner drummers and sustain themselves. Often they are lonely. Authority represents pressure, a nagging nuisance, a threat to their locus of control, to their time schedule and method of going about things. At the same time they want to please and gain approval. While appearing extraordinarily independent (and simultaneously diffident and lazy), they also are extremely sensitive to assurance and acceptance from the significant persons in their lives.

What happens to many of them? Why is it difficult for them to realize their talents and recognize their strengths?

The answers are complicated but an observation of the way in which people grow from childhood to adulthood, especially in a technological, urbanized society, suggest one of the obstacles these young people face. Ernest Becker in his Pulitzer Prize winning book, *The Denial of Death*, describes the dilemma.

". . . .most of us—by the time we leave childhood—have repressed our vision of the primary miraculousness of creation. We have closed it off, changed it, and no longer perceive the world as it is to raw experience. . .We change these heavily emotional perceptions precisely because we need to move about in the world with some kind of equanimity, some kind of strength and directness; we can't keep

gaping with our heart in our mouth, greedily sucking up with our eyes everything great and powerful that strikes us. The great boon of represssion is that it makes possible to live decisively in an overwhelmingly miraculous and incomprehensible world, a world so full of beauty, majesty, and terror that if animals perceived it all they would be paralyzed to act." (Becker, p. 50)

Tenaciously Hold to Inner Visions

Becker purposely presents this fundamental dilemma. He describes the cost to human beings as they leave behind their capacity for awe. Yet, we see the cost to those young people who tenaciously hold to their inner visions and responses. In maintaining their equilibrium in a world that wants them to give up their perceptions for an orderly, decisive and controllable pattern of life, they find difficulty with authority and with the requirements society imposes. They may seem to procrastinate and even defy authority at times. They may act as if they wanted to conform too much to the desires of others and thereby perform poorly. By not following their own interests, they have lost their own integrity. Parents and teachers are infuriated because these students cannot be controlled. They are struggling for a sense of "mine-ness," mastery, and meaning in a world with little recognition for poets, prophets, and those who perform human services. Sometimes these young people find opportunities in the performing arts as the only answer for them. But often, they want academic acceptance. They want credibility in their intellect and confidence in their contributions, in a wide range of interests.

What forces then can help these young people realize their potential and contribute to society? Psychological studies give little help. Orville Brim, Jr., in his article "Socialization through the Life Cycle" states, "There are two great traditions in the study of personality in relation to society. One is the interest in how individuals adjust to society and how in spite of the influence of society upon them they manage to be creative and gradually to transform the social order in which they have been born. The other is the interest in how society socializes the individual – how it transforms the raw material of biological man into a person suitable to perform the activities of society." (pp. 3, 4)

Orville Brim does not state where one finds studies of the first type; his own study is on the latter tradition. At this time biographies and autobiographies are the most significant sources for attaining a measure of understanding of the first tradition in the study of personality in relation to society. Because each individual differs, we are confronted with a particular, potentially gifted student we are trying to guide, and with ourselves.

With those potentially gifted students who are pushing "in spite of the influence of society upon them. . .(to) manage to be creative and gradually to transform the social order in which they have been born," we can only ask what these young people need. They may need help in the process of adjusting to society and creating within it. They do need persons to live with them through the dilemmas, not persons to provide easy, "pat" answers. They need persons who affirm, take seriously, and find value in the students' orientation to life. With this acceptance comes hope, a crucial element in their struggles. As a result, the young people themselves can recognize their inner strivings, express what is going on inside them, and attempt to find creative channels. Adult advisors can point out the choices made, altenatives, and consequences of their actions related to long-term goals. This guidance must be rooted in a genuine desire of the advisor to help the student experience his or her own sense of mine-ness, mastery, and meaning. The focus must be in the direction of the student; otherwise, such guidance becomes further controlling manipulation.

Along with the adult advisor, a peer who has the student's respect and admiration can often have significant influence. The peer, preferably, is one who shares similar experiences and in some way shows mastery in them. A peer relationship of this type can have profound influence on the potentially gifted student.

Adults and peers, through supportiveness, assessment of practical realities, and non-judgmental responsiveness can help students having difficulty realizing their potential, to accept their creative impulses. The students will find channels for them without fear of disapproval or loss of respect. In fact, the young people can discover that the more they affirm their own drives, the more respect they will often receive. However, the most important achievement to experience is self-respect: "I accomplished my own goals."

Chapter VII

ISP STRUCTURES: THE FORTY-MINUTE HOUR

"To create a more creative person" is the goal of the forty-minute hour, the weekly conference period for independent study students and their advisors. Thus, a former student of mine described it at the end of his year's work in his self-evaluation. He also wrote that his intellect, feelings, abilities, values, and quest were integrated authentically in his work, and he performed creatively. Another student experienced the purpose as one which "brought out the best" in a person. "A sense of meaningfulness" in one's academic endeavors, a student felt, was the core of the conference process.

The design of the forty-minute hour, however a student describes it, is to reveal in a creative and disciplined way the essence of a person – his strengths, perceptions, style of learning, mode of expression, resources for managing abilities, and qualities.

Extraordinary Conference Performance

Many forces push and pull to prevent this intended process from taking place. High expectations by the students or the adult advisor, coupled with a need to prove something or to impress someone, may impede intellect and feelings from acting together harmoniously. The intellect may express itself in mechanical factual fashion or the feelings will spill out opinionated reactions. In contrast is the extraordinary conference performance when the student discusses or writes about information and ideas which he or she has thoroughly examined, become involved emotionally, and is intensely interested.

Another force that operates to subdue the process is a fear of creating. Creating, which brings something new to life, is accompanied by a sense of strangeness, aloneness, risk, and a range of new sensitivities. Students need to cope with these experiences to maintain some sense of mastery over themselves. They need to experience trust and assurance in the conference relationship to go ahead.

Because the student realizes the need for disciplined, consistent work while proceeding in this adventure, he or she may wish to be "let off the hook" at times. "You won't let me get away with anything," was the way one student expressed her complaints about the painstaking process involved in creation. This force that wants "to avoid," fights with the force for excellence.

Many other forces are at play in the forty-minute hour, but the process can lead to creativity if the relationship between the advisor and student is open and trusting. When the students know that the advisor cares about their development, they can integrate intellectual search with their own feelings. Their explorations can become genuine and meaningful to them and the creative process can assume momentum in the conference and in the student's work.

As an advisor, I come into a conference with the student selected for the Program with a basic attitude, and certain questions. I trust that the student has something special to offer and determination to do something with that special offering. In talking with the student, the questions I keep in mind are: "What is this student really asking or seeking? What is he or she trying to say? Where do the passions lie in respect to this study?" As I ask these questions, the student becomes for me a unique person, with a unique life experience, creative power, and quest. Answers add directions to the process in which we both participate. At each stage of our work together, I ask the questions again.

I also help the students articulate their questions, probe for deeper comprehension, clarify their curiosity, and organize and focus their thoughts and feelings. This makes for fuller expression, orally and in writing.

The model for what can happen through this conference relationship comes from a young man who was in the Program several years ago. In my midyear report to the administrators, I described Louis as follows: "Louis has unusual characteristics for a young person. He is self-aware, realistic, and motivated to do excellent and original work. He is independent but can seek out and use guidance. He gets on well with peers and adults. He is exploring an area which some authors have touched on but not fully and which, therefore, demands his resourcefulness."

What I did not say in this report was something Louis pointed out in a group discussion. "To know that some person basically cares about your welfare and interests, is essential for any growth to take place." He felt that he had that kind of care in his home. For this reason, perhaps, his attitude towards life was non-judgmental, practical but perceptive and honest. With this attitude he could search with an element of ease for truth about himself and about society.

What Really Distinguishes an Intellectual

Louis entered the Program his senior year to study psychology. He particularly wanted to read theories by Black psychiatrists to understand how the Black experience affected the human psyche. During the first marking period

he read two books by William Grier and Price Cobbs, *Black Rage* and *The Jesus Bag*, and selected articles from *Black Psychology*, edited by Reginald Jones. In his conferences he picked out points from the writings that stimulated his thinking and raised questions in his mind. After several meetings together, he began to focus on education. Grier and Cobbs, he decided, submitted the concept that educational achievements and credentials were the determinants that defined the intellectual individual. Louis himself was beginning to sort out in his mind what colleges he might want to apply to for the coming academic years. During that time he was asking if formal education after high school was what really distinguished an intellectual from one not interested in matters of the mind. Was college primarily a type of insurance for better job opportunities or was it a place where a person could search out the "whys" that his mind constantly created? Was it both? Or did a young person from a lower-middle-income family look at a college education from one view and a young person from a middle-income background look at it from another view?

After Louis articulated these questions in his conference, I sought the advice of a fellow faculty member about resources to suggest to Louis next. With this guidance, Louis read parts of James Comer's *Beyond Black and White*, which describes how the author trained to become a doctor and psychiatrist, and E. Franklin Frazier's *The Black Bourgeoisie*, a description of personalities in the Black middle-class. Selections from Harold Cruse's *The Negro Intellectual* followed.

Louis was disappointed with this last book; the material did not answer his own basic questions. The artists, writers, and other intellectuals who wrote the articles were well known; they did not discuss any possible struggles they might have had "to make it."

Louis suspected that attitudes of society towards "the intellectual" or "the artist" might present handicaps to a young person's development of abilities and interest, especially to Black youth, whom he felt had a double battle. If society made disparaging remarks about intellectuals, it made even harsher judgments about a Black's ability to be an intellectual. I suggested that he read sections of Winthrop Jordan's *White over Black* which carefully documented historical sources of white attitudes in regard to Blacks and education.

With these readings as a springboard for his thinking, Louis decided to center his term paper on the pressures the Black male intellectual experienced as a result of attitudes in society represented by his family, his peers, and the community. He felt that too often a Black youth was ridiculed by his own people if he revealed intellectual and esthetic interests. Living in a Black community which struggled for its survival in a predominantly white society, the young person might sense that its members looked upon intellectual interests as frivolous and impractical, not dealing with the basic everyday issues. The title of his term paper is "The Black Male Intellectual."*

Throughout the semester Louis brought his weekly writings to his conferences. Now that his thoughts were focusing, he also brought in sections for his final paper that he wrote and re-wrote after each conference until he had the product polished to our satisfaction. The further steps he took to explore his topic adequately are in the Introduction to his paper. Both the Introduction and Conclusion sections reflect his characteristic thinking and approach.

Alvin Pouissaint, a Black psychiatrist at the Harvard University Medical School, evaluated the paper for Louis and me. In a rapid response to our correspondence, Dr. Pouissaint commented on the issues raised in the paper and praised it as a "highly sophisticated piece of work for a high school senior."

The forty-minute conference hour lent itself to a person like Louis. In those weekly meetings, he started with a broad interest in psychology, through honest questions found his focus and followed it until he was satisfied intellectually and personally. My participation in this process was mainly to point out the essence of what he was asking and saying, find appropriate resources, help him to organize and clarify his ideas, and to take out my "polishing weapon," as he called my pen.

Stimulus and response, action and reaction occurring mutually between us made our relationship and our work together in the conferences flow smoothly. The next semester Louis went on to raise another vital question and pursued it through reading, writing, and discussion until he had satisfied that particular personal search.

Today he has found another area where he can use his integration of intellectual and emotional strengths. He is studying and is counseling freshmen at a major university in the Northeast. We stay in touch with each other and continue to explore informally interests we have in common.

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* See next page.

The Black Male Intellectual
by
Louis Brown

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to answer two questions: what is the definition of an intellectual? what obstacles does the intellectual face in our society? My particular concern was with the experience of the black male intellectual.

First, I found definitions of an intellectual in the dictionary and in *The Jesus Bag* by Grier and Cobbs. From my own reflections I considered the intellectual as defined by the "Black community."

My study then centered on the need of the black male intellectual to prove his masculinity to others. I cited several examples from personal observations which showed the various ways in which black males with intellectual and esthetic interests have worked out their relationships with the community to insure their acceptance in it. Simultaneously, they have continued with their intellectual life apart from the community.

With analysis of these observations, I became aware of conflicts that presented unsurmountable obstacles to the pursuit of academic ambitions. These conflicts could be categorized as intellectual man vs. his friends and family and intellectual man vs. himself. As I watched the Broadway play, *The River Niger*, I felt that the struggles of the two black male lead characters symbolized some of the conflicts. The father had to quit his pursuit of an education in order to support his in-laws; although the sacrifice was great, the commitment to members of the black family held higher priority. His son had to drop his plans to go to law school in order to help former friends in a cause which no longer held his beliefs. His past with these friends haunted him and caused conflict within himself. Although family and friends can be important sources of support in the black male's struggle for survival, the play shows the circumstances that can be stumbling blocks in his pursuit of intellectual interests.

From these explorations, I began to raise questions about the role of intellectual in American society. How does society at large define the intellectual person? In other words, what constitutes an intellectual and by whose standards is he evaluated? For insight into some answers, I designed a questionnaire which I conducted through interviews with six persons, blacks and whites, all professional people in the fields of education and psychology. Athough these interviews did not give complete or statistical answers, I derived some satisfaction from learning about other views on the subject and realized that, even in this small sampling among people with similar interests, definitions of the intellectual differed.

This paper presents material on the areas that I explored through a step by step approach: first with definitions, second with personal observations, third with symbolic drama and fourth with a questionnaire.

(The paper followed with information and insights well organized, well expressed, and thorough in analysis and interpretation. He ended his piece of work with what he had gained from his exploration.)

CONCLUSIONS

From the variety of definitions of the intellectual that I derived from my investigation, I concluded that society may try to stereotype an intellectual, but no longer can any individual be determined an intellectual according to any one stereotype. There are too many aspects to the definition of an intellectual. Yet, each person must come to grips with his own definition.

My own definition after this study is that the intellectual is a person who is logical and deals with matters of the mind, characteristics common to both the black and white intellectual. He is a person with a thirst for truth, which is learning about reality without fear of the facts. Unlike the "educated" person, the intellectual is interested in constant questioning.

The intellectual is an activist, a mental activist always, a political activist, not necessarily. He has a desire to share his experiences and learning with others. I feel that this is a characteristic common in both blacks and whites but in blacks to a greater degree. The attitudes of society, "Never yet could I find that a black uttered a thought above the level of plain narration"—Thomas Jefferson (Jordon, *White over Black*, p. 437), add to this desire of black intellectuals to relate.

The intellectual is esthetic, esthetic in that he is artistic in his style and in the use of his sense. The black intellectual, like the white intellectual, has this characteristic, but I feel that the black intellectual's sensitivity is sharper. The black has to be intuitive, or skillful, in dealing with his society.

Some call it "common sense." Perhaps it is an unnamed sense. Whatever it is, this sense is a special characteristic of the black intellectual in our society.

The attitudes of society as represented in family, friends and community can affect the way the person interested in intellectual and esthetic pursuits looks at himself, relates to others and strives to achieve his ambitions. If the significant people in his life downgrade the intellectual for his efforts, his task becomes difficult. Sometimes he does not succeed. If the significant people in his life, however, offer care for his well-being and concern for his interests, the intellectual can continue in his self-directed path.

Chapter VIII

ISP STRUCTURES – SIX STUDENTS IN A SEMINAR

Students can find meaning, as well as intellectual exercise, in an academic program. Exploring ideas of authorities with a teacher responsive to their personal concerns, they can more deeply understand themselves and their society. As a result, they can commit themselves to a broader concern with humankind.

Elected Seminar in Social Psychology

Six very different students in the Independent Study Program found meaning in their intellectual search through an elected seminar in social psychology. Each student had expressed an interest as to why human beings act as they do, and how their surroundings influence them.

The students' perspectives differed. Five students were seniors; one was a sophomore. Four students were females; two were males. Four were Blacks, one was Jewish, and one was Italian. Four of them had attended schools outside the urban public school system.

Although each student would benefit from individual study and conferences, each student could also benefit from group meetings. The six students needed a structure in which they could discuss similar questions and exchange diverse points of view. Based upon these needs and interests, an idea was presented to them.

The previous year, students studying Black psychology in the program had enjoyed working in a biweekly seminar with Willie Coleman, a Black doctoral candidate in psychology at Yale University. This year's students also wanted to work with Mr. Coleman in a similar seminar arrangement. He accepted the invitation again to meet with the students studying psychology as a consultant.

In our discussion about the course, Mr. Coleman and I decided upon four steps to follow during the year. In the first semester, the students would study renowned theorists in social psychology with special reference to the socialization process. This would cover the way society trains individuals in their developing stages to function within it. The students would then analyze the educational institution, which they knew from their own experience, to determine how schools influence values, choices, and directions of students to meet the society standards. Finally, with knowledge gained about dynamics of individual behavior and social institutions, the students then could reflect upon their own experiences in education.

Individual weekly conferences with me as the advisor could provide the opportunity for each one to search, probe, discover, and clarify his or her special concerns. The students became acquainted with their own style of learning and expression of ideas. Each individual could experience the best in potential and what each one had to offer.

Perhaps with the year's work, these six young people could develop an understanding of the factors shaping their individual lives, broader perception about human life in general, and deeper commitments to the enhancement of human life in particular. This was our hope. We wondered if this academic arrangement could fulfill the expectation.

Mr. Coleman presented the students with a course outline and the readings for each session. They reacted with partial disdain and partial approval to the first book, *The Primer of Freud* by Calvin Hall. They resisted Freud's cold, mechanistic approach, but they accepted his theories on the id, ego, and superego. Each student understood the struggle of the ego with reality, with the onslaughts of the instinctual id, and conscience-bearing superego. They responded well to Erik Erikson's work describing the qualities of life in the eight ages of man's development. They liked his emphasis on identity with its climatic stage in adolescence. Erickson generally came through his writings with an appealing humaneness.

They enjoyed reading Gerald Patterson's *Families*, a little book which outlines succinctly the key ideas of behaviorism in the familiar context of the family. Patterson's clear, concise approach to the subject stimulated the students to think about the effectiveness of rewards and punishments in their own family settings with siblings, with nieces and nephews, and with themselves.

Socratic Questioning

With these readings, Mr. Coleman's direction through lectures and Socratic questioning, and their own expression of ideas through the seminar and conferences, the students sensed more keenly the vital fuction of the family unit in its nurturing, supportive role. They learned about the destructive results on human development when families played a different role.

In the second semester the students worked with society concepts, with its institutions including the family, which shape the attitudes of its young to train them to live in that society. They started this session with a reading of Tamotsu

Shibutani from his book, *Society and Personality*. His key points on the socialization process were "mind-boggling" at first; the material was new and strange. However, the article was short and concise compared to the next selection, Orville Brim, Jr.'s, "Socialization through the Life Cycle," which delved deeply into the subject. After reading both articles, the students had heated discussions in the seminar. The students were angry. As individualists who took pride in their capacity to think for themsleves and to direct their own actions, they resented information indicating that they had been programmed by society. Had authorities, rather than their own self-direction, shaped their lives? They rejected that idea even though they felt the literature pointed to that conclusion. Were they simply the products of the agents in society who groomed them for expected roles? A "yes" answer would wipe out uniqueness.

The students, in this charged atmosphere, next studied articles by Seymour Sarason on education in the United States, and by Urie Bronfenbrenner on education in the Soviet Union. They faced questions about how schools develop their young people for adaptability in particular societies. The discussion became intense. Mr. Coleman then asked each one to write an essay on the subject of schools and their function, and to speak from his or her own perspective in the writing.

One student stated: "The school does act as a socializing agent having its advantages and disadvantages. The school cannot be blamed for this process; society should be. Society is the one formulating the roles and functions for its members to practice, and the school in turn abides by this formulation; school authorities have no choice (except perhaps in schools designed to alter the situation like the open classroom). As times, roles, and expectations in society change, so will its socialization agents and the ways in which actual socializing functions are practiced."

The same student added later in the paper: "Intellectual creativity is somewhat difficult for a child in the structured school to accomplish. Since the structure is geared toward showing the child what is wanted and expected from him, he is unable to expand his creativity. This is a socializing function used probably because society is not actually looking for creativity on a full scale but is more interested in having the future generation socialized for specific functions, tasks, or positions. Creativity is so flexible and unbounding that society resents it."

A Tension and a Need

All the students in the seminar began to understand the following aspect of the human condition: a tension between individual and society plus the need of each for the other. As the time approached for their final papers in the course, four students undertook the task of investigating the impact on their own lives of families and schools. Two looked at education from special perspectives.

At the end of May, the students presented summaries of their papers at a supper meeting in my home. Everyone in the seminar had selected a place to sit in the living room for our buffet meal. We inadvertently formed a semicircle and remained in this arrangement for presentations. Tammie, our sophomore, was in a high, handsome slat-back armchair which made a suitable backdrop for her tall, graceful posture. In previous years, Tammie had read extensively in the area of child psychology inspired by an aunt working on a graduate degree in psychology. Tammie was the prodigy of our group.

James sat on the couch to Tammie's left. He was six foot, two inches, and his long legs stretched under the coffee table. Although he looked like a football player, he was the group's poet and humorist. There were times in the seminar during the year when James would break up the intensity of a discussion with a few words of brilliant humorous insight. In spite of our seriousness, he always left us laughing. Combined with his wit was a gentleness of spirit and a touch of lyricism.

Beverly sat at the other end of the couch. With her bouncy spirited air she switched her sitting positions several times during the course of the evening when she was excited by an idea or adamant on a point. Beverly was our educator. This year she had assisted a teacher in a Spanish classroom; in the future she wanted to work in some area of special education.

Marilyn, with her petite frame, sat in a small rush-bottomed armchair next to the couch. Although short in stature, she was strong in spirit, determined in direction, and frank in her appraisal of people, places, and events. Marilyn never feared pointing out the treacherous tricks that could destroy human freedom and potential. She was our prophet. Her long black hair tossed to and fro as she fervently described her thoughts about society and its future.

Sequella was our future professional; her plan was to be a doctor. She selected a business-like black wooden armchair in the curve of the semicircle. Sequella had worked in a medical laboratory after school during the year. Her presentation and remarks were straightforward and sharp in analysis.

To fit his tall frame, Rick chose the large wing chair which was next to Sequella. Rick was an ace hockey player, our group's athlete. Although agressive on the ice, he sat silently that evening as the others read their reports. When it was his turn, he expressed the gratitude he felt for the learning he experienced by being a member of this group.

The fireplace separated Rick and Mr. Coleman, six foot, four inches, and sitting in a tall stately Shaker rocker. With a concentrated look, but without revealing facial expressions, Mr. Coleman listened. He always communicated a mind constantly and provocatively at work. His intermittent remarks and challenging Socratic questions revealed what

he had been thinking during his silences. Mr. Coleman was our reflective thinker.

My chair, to the left of Mr. Coleman's was placed near the dining room. Seated in a low wooden chair, I could make a quick departure to refill plates and glasses when necessary. That evening, I was the cook in the group. Also, I wanted to be the last to speak. Having read all the papers before the presentations, I felt prepared to give a statement which would draw together insights from each report and, in effect, be a formula for good education. I was the group's "summarizer."

Atmosphere of Respect and Appreciation

Surrounding this semicircle of prodigy, poet, prospective educator, prophet, future professional in medicine, athlete, thinker, and "summarizer," was an atmosphere of respect and appreciation for each other's experience. Each individual's experience with education led also to an atmosphere of broader concern. The students had a genuine caring about the process of learning and how it could benefit all people. Each student suggested a significant element for consideration in a total formula for education. The following excerpts from the papers provide the evidence of this caring.

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Tammie started the session. At one time Tammie attended a surburban school whre she enjoyed rigorous academic courses but could not pursue her special intellectual interests. This year, in the urban high school through her course in the Independent Study Program, she was choosing her own books from a list of possible readings about emotionally disturbed children. She discussed and wrote about their symptoms, environments, and therapies. Later, and in her final paper, she read material on gifted children and wrote about their special needs. Owing to a fine experience in a Montessori school in her younger years, Tammie remembered the times when she could reach frontiers of her mind, when her curiosity could explore in a setting where teachers responded with enthusiasm to her questions, and where her individuality could unfold under instruction designed for her. Now, in her sophomore year, similar excitement stirred her as she probed into the corners of her own thinking. As a result, she was stimulated instead of bored, fulfilled instead of frustrated. Because of these two experiences and from her research, Tammie wanted education, especially for the gifted, which would be rigorous, provide the student with necessary resources, and be responsible to the child.

Tammie stated in her paper: "My definition of the gifted child covers a wide range of children and their different abilities. The gifted child may be gifted not only in certain areas but also in a wide choice of fields. Or a gifted child may have his superior talents only in English but may not be able to express himself in math, gym, etc. The gifted child can be mentally superior to his or her classmates but have emotional and/or physical disabilities so crippling that they limit the extent to which the child can work. The gifted child is a special person who, because of certain abilities, can experience special tensions when trying to produce more than he or she can handle. This child is a human and can only be pushed so much.

"There are dangers for these persons that might come into view only in later years. They too are subject to defeat and disappointment sometimes and need support emotionally in crisis. They may be stunted (psychologically) because of race or sex; nobody may care about their gifts because nobody takes them seriously. They may not be understood fully and may not receive the help they need. As children with rare abilities, only special understanding can help them grow.

"Gifted children need, along with parental support, the type of supportive school setting in which they can work to their capacity without pressure, but with motivating forces and challenges. Their surroundings, atmosphere, and working conditions in school must enable them to work in serenity. They must also, and most importantly, have rapport with their instructors so that they can work with ease, without feelings of depression and without feelings of disinterest on the part of the teachers.

"The gifted child needs freedom of expression with certain controls that do not bring undue suppression. The education of this child must be tailor-made to fit his or her needs and must be extensive enough to educate the child in all areas of learning. The task is large and demanding; the rewards are worth the effort for society."

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James followed Tammie. His natural interest was in people, their individual actions and their behavior in organizations. He observed the treatment of one person by another, the behavior of teacher toward students, and of student toward student. In his paper, he compared his experiences in urban elementary schools with those in a suburban junior high school and an urban high school. He described differing degrees of kindness, friendliness, and concern for the individual that he observed in these schools among administrators, faculty and students. He focused on the qualities of the relationships and the atmospheres that encouraged or stopped growth.

One characteristic of mind and spirit that prevailed in James' paper was sensitivity. Included in the paper were several lyrical autobiographical pieces. One piece on sleigh riding with his younger brother especially captured the liveliness of his senses. This year he had learned to accept and express his deepest responses to the beauty in nature, others, and himself.

The opening of the essay section of his paper describes his experience in first grade.

"I was the biggest in my class. Mrs. Foster, my first grade teacher, was very kind to everyone and seemed to take an interest in each one. Mrs. Foster put me in the middle group in math and reading, but she put me in the top section of her mind as the nicest person in that class. She always would give me something as a reward, most of the time for doing little things. Usually it was a dime or a lollipop.

"One day, however, the reward was out of the ordinary. She gave it to me for something unusual. It happened during recess when all of us were in the park. Towards the end of the recess time, the others were heading back towards the school. A little girl in my class named Jennifer suddenly twisted her ankle. As I was the only one besides Jennifer still in the park, I put her arm around me to carry her. It started hurting her arm so I gave her a piggyback ride instead all the way to the classroom. Mrs. Foster was so grateful to me that she gave me a dollar and Jennifer gave me a kiss. That really made my day!

"From then on I was Mrs. Foster's pet, and she took a great deal of interest in me. So much so that she noticed I needed glasses to help my reading and math. She also told my second grade teacher about my eye weaknesses and what to help me with the most in my work. She went on to tell the other teacher what a wonderful person I was, and so on and on.

"This was a lady I will never forget because of her concern and her feelings for all her students. I don't remember ever having a teacher again who pointed out things (like my eyesight) that were necessary to help me later in life, or to motivate me to be kind to all people I met. I feel that if more teachers started to express greater concern and to give that kind of motivation to keep young folks together, there would be better schools and stronger adults."

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Following James, Beverly presented a summary of her autobiographical sketch. The theme of her paper was self-reliance, its importance to healthy growth, and the influences that foster or hamper it. In her psychology study during this year, she had read, in addition to the seminar readings, nonfiction accounts of disturbed adolescents. She found that *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* and *Sybil* particularly pointed out the attitudes, pressures, and settings which destroy mastery of oneself.

In her paper she explored her educational experiences. The good times in her school life were when she herself could act, participate, choose, and decide. When she couldn't, she felt stultified. From her study and from her personal explorations, she concluded that the most important dynamic in a person's growth is the force which pushes towards true independence. She acknowledged the need each one has for others, the place of authority, and limits within any situation. Yet, she realized that each person has the right to breathe for him or herself.

The excerpts from her paper describe some of the good times, some of the bad times and her final conviction: "The fifth grade was fun mainly because I had been fortunate enough to get the most dedicated teacher in the whole school, and she made me feel as if I could do my work well and encouraged me to question things.

"In this class I, like the other students, had the opportunity to perform different duties as attendance monitor, barometer reader, vice president, president, and secretary at different times. These duties meant a lot to each of us. When I had the opportunity to be in one of these positions, I took my position quite seriously because I had never experienced playing roles in the classroom. It was fun!"

Another year in another class brought a contrast: "The walls of the classroom were bare with the exception of a bulletin board filled with art productions created during art instruction with an art teacher who visited us once a week, but those pictures soon came down from the board. Lessons were so uninteresting, we spent much of the time looking out the windows. . .The teacher gave no help on the math when I asked for it. Language skills became terrible because the entire class had to repeat the exercises several times over. To this day I don't accept repetition that easily.

"On the other hand, in science we observed the teacher dissect a frog. We used microscopes. In social studies we did things like longitudinal-latitudinal studies, read current events taken from news clippings and even had the opportunity to write, direct, and act in our own play. In these teachers' rooms, I felt as if I were learning something through participating in my education."

She concluded: "It's important for a person to know what independence and decision making mean before he goes out into the world, and that means the person has to go through the process of decision making at an early age. If he understands this process, he will be more secure, not afraid to stand up for himself in times of right and in times of wrong. To be able to stand on your own feet, and know at the same time you must answer to someone else, is one of the most important things an education can do for you."

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Marilyn had her turn after Beverly. For her paper, on the survival of the individual in today's world, she had read George Orwell's *1984*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock* and Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch*. She found the threat to the uniqueness of the individual by modern technology and totalitarianism fearsome. In Ivan Denisovitch she found an individual who, consciously made choices even in a labor camp, and deliberately worked with excellence

on a given task. Thus he maintained his individuality and realized some satisfaction within the confines of his life.

In the second part of her paper, Marilyn reviewed her school years in terms of individuality. She examined the threats to individuality and the tools for developing one's inner resources. She noticed that, in the elementary and junior high years, a lack of concern for a student's self-confidence, imagination, and creative questions stifled individuality. Sameness and monotony in the daily work, strictness and tightly-structured routine smothered originality. A strong will and a determination on her part to become a person and not a number, particularly in a large diverse urban high school, had enabled her to develop her own resourcefulness, she felt, and to benefit from her education.

She describes other tools in the following excerpts from her paper: "Slowly, I became a little more aware of my situation. My observations of people, reactions, and incidents were a prime factor in my trying to step a little closer to whatever the feeling of being in the school was. Not only was this understanding achieved, but these observations helped me to look at everything more objectively from then on. By watching everything around me, I was able to find and understand what I was looking for. By arriving at my own opinions and holding to them, I acquired more confidence.

"Through all this experience, I began to explore my interests in more detail. Studying subjects that I enjoyed, overcoming academic obstacles, competing in sports, and achieving a sense of confidence, pride, and uniqueness in myself were just a few things I feel that I have gained from this high school. I feel that one gets what one wants out of an education. Sometimes it is hard to grasp, but it is always there if you take the time to look for it. This is what I feel about my academic education; I do think I have learned as much as I could grasp. As far as the entire environment goes, I could not have learned more about people than here. The school has been a *total* experience for me, and I could not be more satisfied with it."

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After Marilyn came Sequella with a statement about life and death in schools. From former experiences in a Montessori school in Ohio, Sequella, like Tammie, knew that education could be the wellspring of life. From her supplementary readings in the psychology course, she knew also that education could bring "death at an early age," to quote Nat Hentoff's *Our Children Are Dying* and other books describing elementary school years. She observed the apathy of some of her fellow students; she speculated that perhaps what was lacking was the Montessori method.

She quoted this statement in her paper: "Each child should be encouraged to work to his maximum capacity, but it is of utmost importance that no child be allowed to fail by being encouraged to go beyond his capacity, for each exercise is a step into the experience of success." Her own question followed the statement. "The school has a socializing function, but should it not direct its children towards life, not death?"

Part of Sequella's paper included the tabulation and analysis of answers to a questionnaire distributed to twenty-eight students in the Independent Study Program from the four high schools it served.

The thirty questions sought to find out student attitudes towards school and classmates, towards learning, towards ISP and towards specific areas of everyday school study.

Sequella described what she felt was one of the most significant findings from the questionnaire. "One of the opportunities these students consider to be most important is the opportunity to express themselves. They feel that self-expression is what is involved in learning. Learning is an omnipresent question that is vital to life. This self-expression, they felt, becomes possible with individualized work and sharing of ideas."

A related finding concerned teachers: "The effective teacher is described as one who is able to communicate, tries to learn with the students and is more than just a person who teaches well from one bell to another."

After her interpretation of the books she had read and of the questionnaires she had analyzed, Sequella concluded: "The basic aim of education is the whole development of man (male/female). Through understanding of one's environment, senses, thinking processes, and behavior comes self-awareness, self-mastery, and self-attainment."

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Rick ended the presentations with a description of three totally different school environments: a parochial elementary school, a northeastern preparatory school, and our large urban high school where he spent his last two years before college. These three experiences developed three basic concerns: the need for an atmosphere in school in which the student feels comfortable raising questions; the need for people who encourage the student to be himself; and the need for different races and ethnic groups to study together.

Rick had read *Families* by Patterson for the seminar, and as a result began to wonder how his brother and sister-in-law raised his niece. He had made some observations previously; now he wanted to look more extensively. His brother and sister-in-law agreed to an arrangement by which Rick could observe how rewards and reenforcement of behavior affected his niece. Particularly interesting was the effectiveness of the coming of Santa Claus on her behavior at Christmas time. Post-Christmas days, without the promise of Santa in

the immediate future, brought slight changes in his niece in picking up toys, making her bed and washing hands before dinner. She was not as consistent; she had to be reminded to do these things more often than in pre-Santa days.

Later, in connection with his study for the seminar, he sought permission from his classroom English teacher to work on an independent basis analyzing the psychological implications of the characterizations and themes in literature. When she was enthusiastic about his desire to work creatively, he became more creative.

In his paper, he stated: "Faculty members should keep one main objective in mind: let the students find themselves. Teachers should merely seek where the students are coming from, what they are trying to communicate about themselves, and act accordingly. All too often, teachers side-step students' needs and this action only rejects the students. A teacher's job should be to set up goals for the students and help students to set up goals for themselves in any course. The structure of the course should incorporate both goals. Although this task can't be accomplished overnight, it is necessary; everything should not get forced upon an individual. An individual's willingness to grasp ideas set by society would come through his own understanding of them, in view of his abilities and interests."

Finally, Rick felt that his experience in an urban high school had prepared him for life. "The exposure to people from different backgrounds erased my prejudices and fears about other ethnic and racial groups. It provided me with a new and rewarding experience; it intoduced me to new friends. Education without diversity cannot prepare people to live in society."

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The insights of these six students indicate a formula for education.

Any educational system should combine traditional approaches and flexible approaches to meet the needs of different types of students. Each educational system should provide discipline in skills and rigorous academic work, should encourage creative expressions and give opportunities for exchange of ideas based on the racial and socioeconomic diversity of the student body.

In all education, the decision-making process needs to begin in the early elementary years. Making choices, deciding on priorities and determining values enables the student to develop self-mastery and independence. When the atmosphere is open, relaxed, stimulating, challenging, and supportive, the student can decide on his own directions and style of life and take the responsibility for these choices. When he has the opportunity to explore, to discover, and to question, the student learns about himself. When significant persons recognize him, not only for qualities of analysis and logic, but also for kindness, sensitivity and response to beauty, he can grow with honesty in thinking and feeling.

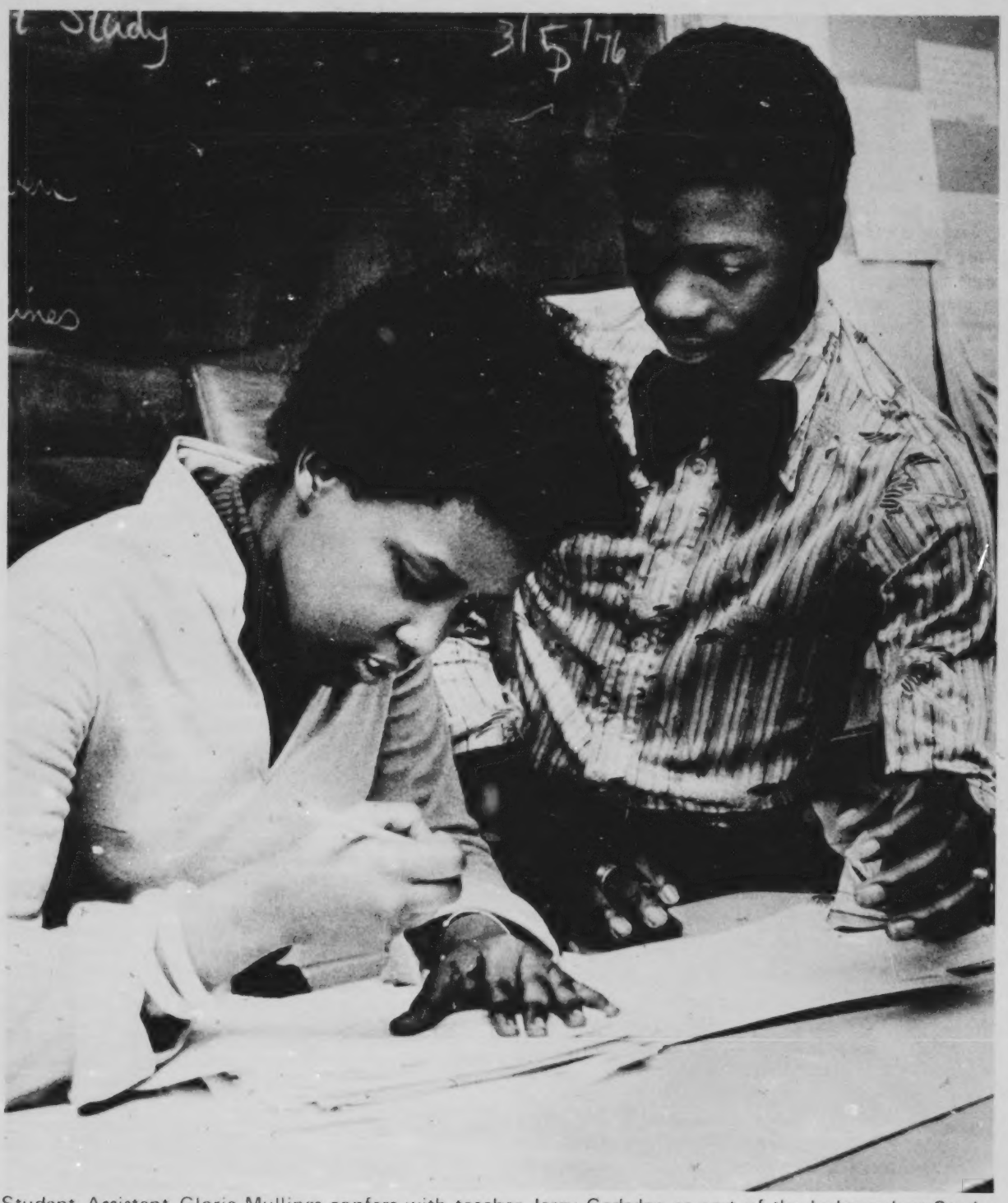
Students need educational systems that can recognize and encourage their potentialities.

As people look deeply into their own experience in family, school, and society, they discover a vital aspect that contributes to the total picture of what education needs to be. Education should provide a system which guides the individual towards self-fulfillment and towards a commitment to the self-fulfillment of others so that each one can work for the dignity, respect, and freedom of all persons.

Tammie, James, Beverly, Marilyn, Sequella, and Rick discovered something about society and the way it shapes its young people to its standards, and something about individuals and how they develop their own identities within the structures of society. Exploring education and their experiences made them look more closely at themselves. Their final interpretation of their readings and remarks showed a deeper understanding of their own attributes and desires and of their relationships to groups in their own society. Their horizons broadened to include ideas and ideals about what education could and should be for all.

Their search, rooted in intellectual striving, and experience, was meaningful. Their wrestling with ideas with each other, with a consultant, and with an advisor was real. Their readings, instead of being encyclopedic exercises, became adventures in genuine learning.

Education can provide resources for a diverse group of high school students in inner city high schools. These students can provide a hope for the future.



Student Assistant Gloria Mullings confers with teacher Jerry Gadsden as part of the Independent Study Program. She not only learns the responsibilities of teaching, but helps the younger students on a one-to-one basis and provides a model of achievement for them to follow.

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Chapter IX

ISP STUDENTS: SENIORS ASSIST IN THE CLASSROOM

Sabrina came into my room one day in December and sat down with a smile of satisfaction. She was bursting with joy as she talked about her experience as a senior research assistant in a math freshman classroom, an opportunity made possible by our Independent Study Program: "I'm so proud of my students. Two months ago they didn't understand the math they had to do. Now their test marks are in the 80's and 90's. I am really glad for them." She paused and reflected, "I think that with Mr. R.'s teaching and with my helping him and the students, we really accomplished something."

Sabrina expressed in those happy words the essence of the Research Assistant Program; teamwork between a classroom teacher and an able senior can benefit young freshmen. This idea came to our ISP staff from the experience of a private boarding school where independent study seniors acted as teaching interns in freshmen classrooms. Because of the enthusiasm of the participants in that program, our staff decided to structure a full-year commitment with one-course credit for our interested, qualified seniors. Our title became "research assistant" instead of "teaching intern," however, because undergraduates from a local college were called teaching interns in their practice teaching in our school. We did not want to confuse roles.

Opportunity for Seniors

One purpose of this program is to provide not only "experiential education" but also the opportunity for these seniors to contribute their talents to the ongoing life of the school. Lurene, a former research assistant presently in a college which trains prospective teachers, described how her experience fulfilled this purpose.

Throughout her high school years, Lurene thought about becoming a teacher. In her senior year, she asked to assist Mr. G. in an English classroom. Because she wanted to learn about the role and responsibilities of a teacher, Mr. G. had her go to the gamut of the teacher's tasks. In the beginning of the year she listened and observed what was going on in the classroom. Then she took attendance each day. After six to seven weeks, she started working with different groups of students on prefixes and suffixes. Occasionally she worked with the whole class on vocabulary. When students needed individual attention, she gave each one her time and direction. Through this type of relationship, she spotted a child who could not understand the work because of a special reading problem. Upon recommendation of Lurene and the English teacher, the student went for instruction to the school's reading specialist. During the second semester, Lurene planned lessons and assignments. Based on her preparations, she taught the class twice a week.

The total year's experience meant many things to Lurene. "I learned to understand children. At first I felt the classroom was a grave situation to cope with, but once I got to know the kids and to understand them, the work was easier. However, then I found that I got too friendly with them; they started to take advantage of me. I had to learn to firm up. I did, and they respected me more. Now that I am studying in a college preparing me to be a teacher, I am certainly glad that I had the research assistant work."

Lurene worked in a field in which she was interested. She learned to give in a challenging situation. A second purpose of the program is to provide needed assistance for the classroom teacher. The teacher can plan instruction for groups of three or four students, occasionally arrange tutorial instruction within the classroom for those in need of one-to-one attention, and structure enriched lessons based on resource work the assistant can do. The teacher and senior assistant decide upon the specific tasks according to the needs of that classroom and the assistant's interest and abilities. Once a teacher experiences a full year with an assistant, that teacher looks forward to another assistant the next year.

"I'm sold on this arrangement," Mrs. M., who had an assistant in her beginning French class, said emphatically. "After seeing how the students responded so attentively to Sharon and the lectures on the French culture that she researched and prepared for her presentation, I'm convinced that students like to hear someone close to their own age. They listen more. Now I'm looking in a new way at my juniors to see who might assist me next year."

Mrs. M.'s remarks represent the thoughts of the teachers who work with the research assistants. The teachers enjoy them.

Provide Academic Models

A third purpose of the program is to provide academic models for the freshmen. By his or her presence, the senior research assistant seems to say that it's all right to carry books, study them, and show enthusiasm about what is in them. Also, the attractive female senior assistant and the good-looking male senior assistant provide appealing images

unlike the dreary stereotype of the "egghead." They are in a position to become the pacesetters in a school.

Several years ago a young man named Carl assisted Mr. C. in an English classroom. Carl was quiet, low-keyed, serene and stable in his approach to life. He was also handsome. Everyday he took a small group of freshmen students from the class into another room to work on skills, go over tests, and discuss literature. Since the members of the group rotated according to the needs, Carl was in contact with every student in the class.

The responses of the freshmen to Carl impressed Mr. C. The girls' responses especially surprised him. He had thought that with a senior male they might be giggly, cute, or chatty to get attention. Instead, they placed Carl on a pedestal, respected him, listented to him almost with an attitude of awe, and learned from him. Carl was pleased. At the end of the school year, he mentioned that the experience with these students meant much to him. The students' potential had developed and his own self-confidence in communicating with others had grown. Mr. C. expressed deep gratitude for Carl's participation which contributed beyond what one teacher could accomplish by himself and which provided the students with a peer model.

The three purposes mentioned above are described in a statement of requirements which the seniors who sign up for the Research Assistant Program receive when they volunteer. The seniors must also keep daily journals of their observations and write two term papers based on these journals. They have quarterly evaluations (marks with comments) from their teachers and self-evaluations to write in relation to their work. With experiential education, with an opportunity to contribute needed assistance to the classroom teacher, and with the chance to be an academic model for freshmen, the senior has a new learning experience.

Though the student chooses the teacher and the subject area he or she wants, sometimes the teacher and the senior assistant have difficulty working together. The student can then choose a different teacher. At other times a teacher is able to help the senior adjust to the specific situation with satisfaction for both. Also, some freshmen do not respond as well as the students Sabrina described. Lurene, when discussing her experience, observed that "some students do not care about anything, about who you are, or what you're doing." Fortunately, these three drawbacks (apathetic student attitudes, lack of performance on the part of the assistant, and untenable work arrangements) occur infrequently in our program. More frequent are the stories of delight and concern which the assistants relate at their monthly meetings.

Twice a year the seniors read the papers on their observations at these monthly meetings. The last January get-together provided an opportunity to capture and to record many of their insights. The meeting started with informal conversation shared with coffeecake, cookies, and cokes as all of us sat around the long table in Independent Study section of the library. In an atmosphere of conviviality and concern, Mr. G., who acted as an advisor for all the participants in the assistant program, asked the students to begin their reports. Mr. G. for many years had had one or two assistants in his English classrooms. He was well acquainted with the unique qualities these seniors displayed in their work as assistants. Now he eagerly awaited the expressions of that uniqueness through the reports.

Learned How to Conduct a Music Class

Torrance started the session. He had entered the Independent Study Program when he was a sophomore to study the history of jazz and its great band leaders with his own dreams of becoming a band leader in the future. He could play the piano and several other instruments. At this time, as a senior, he was thinking about teaching music after college in a classroom or privately in a studio. He wanted to find out how a high school teacher conducted a music class. For this reason he assisted Mr. B. in his music appreciation class with freshmen. Torrance became aware particularly of how students responded to the unfamiliar.

An excerpt from his paper describes his experience: "I now understand some of the students in this class and why the troublesome ones acted the way they did. For instance, I think that the reason the students did not like the symphonic music is because they were used to hearing other kinds of music on the radio an on records they buy. Therefore, when the students heard music they were not used to hearing and did not know, they did not want to know about the music. As a result, they did not put forth their best efforts in listening. Perhaps they thought music appreciation class was going to concentrate on the music they liked.

"Now the class of the second quarter consists only of girls, and these girls seem to be more disciplined, ready and willing to learn compared to the class of the first quarter. This class is doing what the girls want to do which brings out more class participation. Mr. B. and I are teaching the class how to play the piano. Everyday each girl gets to go to the piano and play it. While this practice is going on, the other girls are at their desks using a practice keyboard in the back of a book called *Living with Music*. With this class, I can be of great help to the slow students because I can play the piano. If a student is having trouble, I can help the student reach the level of the class if she wants to get there. I enjoy this class more because the subject is something I know more about than the first quarter.

"I would suggest that if a teacher is in a position to teach a class what it wants, as long as the subject helps the students or learn, he or she should take advantage of the opportunity."

Sabrina, with her slight frame and small feminine features, might impress an onlooker as a timid and passive person. When she described her classroom, however, her tenacious and active concern for the students dispelled any stereotype. The source of Sabrina's strength was her determined desire for an academic atmosphere in which eager students could learn. Mr. R., the math teacher she assisted, had such respect for her drive that when he was absent, he contacted her immediately to give her instructions for the day to work out with the substitute teachers. The substitutes were bewildered, at first, about her role until they realized what command she had in that classroom.

A few observations from her report highlight her insights and interests.

"Academically, I think that the majority of the students are very interested in learning, but, as you know, in every group there are bound to be a few who are uninterested. If the students who want to learn feel others are distracting them, they let those students know. That reaction shows that certain students really want to learn. About 85% of the class picks up things very quickly. The other 15% is a little slower, but with the help from Mr. R. and me, they eventually catch on.

"About 95% of the class participates when the class is doing oral work. The remaining five students participate when they feel like it. These five also set themselves apart from the other members of the class.

"The individual effort varies depending on the student. The boys are more eager to learn than the girls. They constantly ask questions and try to figure out solutions for problems.

"For their age group, I think that the students are very dependable and responsible. However, there are days when the students do not feel like working. I try to arrange something that will please all of us; it is not always easy to accomplish this goal. Sometimes I end up giving the student the choice of doing the work or taking an "F" for the day."

Research Assistant in Spanish

Linda's activities as an assistant covered a variety of tasks. In her report she described some of the daily details she carried out in a Spanish classroom for freshmen. Because Linda had known the teacher for several years, she wanted to help her in whatever way she could. Although she was interested in studying to be a pediatric nurse, she felt that the experience she had as a Research Assistant in Spanish would be invaluable if she decided to change her plans and become a teacher. Linda's remarks on her activities in this role reflect her experience.

"I have worked with three students who are very slow. I think some of the students I help are poor students because they do not pay attention and are absent too much. When I tutor them, I go over the lesson slowly and then ask them if they do not understand something I have said. I go over the points they do not understand. I enjoy working and helping these students. By taking them to the library or to an unoccupied classroom for our sessions, I can give them my undivided attention, and they can be free of distractions. In my teaching, I apply some of the techniques I observed Mrs. F. use in the classroom.

"Besides observing and teaching, I decorate the classroom by making posters and charts which illustrate the unit the class is studying in their Spanish textbook. I am responsible for the appearance of the room. On occasion I correct quizzes and even unit tests which are then rechecked by Mrs. F.

Tanya's work was more specialized. Tanya did plan to be a teacher on the secondary level. This year she was not only a research assistant but also a student in the psychology seminar in Independent Study, a seminar that covered readings on adolescent psychology. Tanya easily related her intellectual work and her teaching tasks. With conceptual ability and sensitive perceptiveness, she developed a sound working relationship with two Spanish-speaking students struggling to achieve in their junior year English class. Her report, therefore, included a case study showing the development of the two students.

"My project was created differently than the regular project of the Research Assistant student. Because I was a Spanish IV student, my R.A. advisor suggested that I help him by tutoring two Spanish-speaking students in his sixth period junior English class. This arrangement was different than I had expected, but it was a challenge.

"As the project began, the students responded to me very well. We discovered that we had been together last year in the Spanish III class. They responded to me, to Mr. G. and to the English class juniors without many problems at all. This response was remarkable because last year, their first year in our high school, they could not speak a word of English.

"Since our relationship was good, I tried many teaching techniques with them. Sometimes I spoke English; other times I spoke Spanish. We often used Spanish terms which the three of us understood. This was advantageous to me, and when they remembered certain things in Spanish, the English became clearer to them. This style helped them to become more and more independent. The results were surprising. They never let one thing go until they felt secure with some comprehension. When they were confused in the classroom, I took them aside and worked the problems out to the best of their knowledge. I eventually worked myself out of my task. They asked for my help fewer and fewer times and received higher grades and better grades than some of their English-speaking classmates. This was an experimental project, and I am very satisfied with the results.

Observed Students' Abilities

"In this work, also, I made a careful observation of the students' abilities and applied techniques my teachers have used with me. I correlated my psychology readings with the two adolescents in this teaching relationship. Becoming acquainted with the learning processes of this age group through study and application, I found that my own motivation to learn as an adolescent myself increased. It was like a two-way street. I helped two adolescents to learn; I learned with my advisors. In this way especially, the experience was meaningful."

Gloria, a student with a flair for poetry and drama, described with humor, poignancy, and tenderness the work she did with four foreign students in their freshman year in an American high school. She captured in words some of their difficulties, some of their strengths and in one instance, the barrier between her and the student. Operating from her feelings, she experienced the "hardships and the victories."

"John had been in America only a year. He did not know the language well and so communicating with others seemed almost impossible. When first introduced, we hit it off pretty well. Although slow, John seemed like a hard worker. His motivation was so intense that I was drawn to him to give him personal attention. John came on in his work on about a kindergarten level. He did not know his alphabet and his vocabulary was limited.

"I started off with a test everyday and drilling in alphabet writing. His vocabulary then began to increase on a rapid basis. Rudolfo came and this meant competition for John. Not only intellectually but time wise; I would have to spend time with Rudolfo. This kind of deprivation motivated John more. Before long I had achieved my first victory. I had taught John to read and write on about the fourth grade level. He was able to communicate with me in English. This was my first experience in learning in this setting.

"Suk was shy and quiet. She seemed very introverted but was the smartest of the four. She was on about the fourth grade level with her main difficulty in the area of speaking. Written work came easily, and she learned fast. Suk had the opportunity to work with another teacher. The relationship between Suk and me does not run very deeply. But she, as the others, contributed to my experience in learning. Since she was unable to identify words with concrete objects, I learned to appreciate my vocabulary more.

"Maria kept to herself most of the time. She understood the language well but could not write well. Maria seemed more Americanized in that she seemed to be more used to America, particularly to the American men. Maria, although only fifteen, was a woman, bogged down by the problems of womanhood. My major problem in relating to Maria was that I was a black woman. Once, while being taught by a student teacher from Southern Connecticut State College, she showed drastic improvement. Perhaps the reason was that Sheila, the tutor, was white and young, just as Maria was. Because my relationship with Maria was a crisis, I became more determined to try to get through to the others.

"Rudolfo was a blessing in disguise. He knew English well and could write limited sentences and read on about a fifth or sixth grade level. I worked with Rudolfo on the parts of speech: nouns, verbs and others. I helped him to read stories and answer questions on what he read. Rudolfo was somewhat of a comedian and brightened up the lesson daily. He always referred to himself as a genius and to John as a dummy. This assessment actually helped John to work harder. Of all my students, I will never forget Rudolfo. He made teaching fun with his jokes."

Gloria added: "I will always remember my experiences in learning. I had the golden opportunity to work with foreign students. Teaching is rewarding enough but helping someone to speak another language is even more rewarding. I would like to thank John, Suk, Maria, and Rudolfo for fulfilling a spot in my life. Wherever I go and whatever I do, the impression they left on me will influence me greatly."

Sandra, the last person to report, was not only interested in her research assistant work but also in her role as an observer in the classroom. She wanted to record as many detailed observations as possible for her own learning experience and for the communication of this experience to others. She carefully followed the format for the research assistants' papers and presented her material with precise details and clear interpretations. Because her paper gives an overall picture of what a research assistant observes and does, her entire paper closes this description of the Research Assistant Program.

As the January meeting with its oral presentations ended, Mr. B., a research assistant teacher who always attended the monthly meetings, told the assistants: "When I come to these meetings and learn about what all of you are doing, how you are going about your work and why you're acting as assistants, I go away with a renewed spirit. You young people bring hope."

Research Assistant
Observation Paper
by
Sandra Henderson

During the first term of the year, I have made a number of observations. I shall begin with the classroom's physical structure. The appearance of the classroom is not one of beauty. There are no decorations about. I prefer a classroom of this nature for the reason that there are less distractions and the students are unable to "sit and stare" at attractive decorations about the room. The size of the class is small. This is an advantage to myself, to the teacher and to the students because it allows the teacher and me to give the students more individualized assistance. To give an idea of the daily routine, I shall give an example of the typical classroom period. Mr. S. begins by repeating the explanation of the homework of the previous night. Students who had difficulties speak up and Mr. S. goes over the work. After collecting the homework, students take notes and homework assignments. Usually, in about the last ten minutes of the period, Mr. S. gives a preview of the lesson that will be taught on the following day.

The educational atmosphere in the classroom is a combination of highly structured and informal education. Mr. S. makes it clear to the students that there is a time for work and a time for play. On occasion he may make a joke or two to keep the students alert.

The students do not take his occasional joking as a reason to begin playing. They may laugh, and tell him that his jokes are "corny" but then it is straight back to work. Mr. S. is very strict when it comes to fooling around in class. The students are aware that any talking means that they will have to remain after school. I think that this is the reason that the students are usually well-behaved. It is very seldom that a student misbehaves. Though Mr. S. never physically handles a student, his scoldings do every bit as good.

The teaching technique that Mr. S. uses is usually a lecture/drill form of teaching. After he lectures the group, he drills them on the problems he covered in the lecture. I feel that sometimes this method of teaching tends to be tiresome and uninteresting to the students. This is shown by the occasional resting of heads on the desks and yawning or doing other things besides giving their undivided attention.

The academic level of the students in this Algebra I class is supposed to be the highest in the freshman class. There are only a few in the class who seem to be extremely bright. Those few seem to grasp methods of Algebra very quickly. One student in particular is a young lady who I think is excellent, with a mind that will do her justice some day. She seems to be a very quiet person. She seldomly associates with the other students in the class. She always participates in class discussions and hands in homework, neat and on time. I would like to work with her individually in order to go ahead of the class because I know that she is capable. I think that it is very possible the class pace may be a little too slow for her ability.

Usually about three fourths (¾) of the class has consistent participation in each class lesson. Most of the class is usually very eager to approach the blackboard and attempt to tackle the math problems. There are a few students who seldom participate, and when it is time to take a test or to do a class assignment, they say that they do not understand. One female student is concerned with reading love books, combing her hair or doing other homework. Then, about fifteen minutes before the class is over, she comes forth with the very familiar saying of "I do not understand." I can see that Mr. S. is becoming unglued, but he hides his emotions and just explains the work and advises this student to read the chapter and to study her notes.

In observing each student I have learned about their personalities and their strengths and weaknesses. I have learned that some students do not take their high school education seriously. From time to time, I have reminded them that faulty attendance and the lack of promptness to class contribute to low grades. I have also reminded those that are absent frequently that they must make up their work and the tests that they have missed. There is one male student who has been absent for approximately three fourths (¾) of the marking period. He is a boy who is always sick, and he is also failing the course. I advised him to contact his counselor and to see about getting a tutor. I doubt that he took my advice seriously. Now he is back in school doing a little better. He is not lacking in arithmetic skill; the class just seems to be moving too fast for him. He insists that he knows how to do the work, but he fails the tests. When I tutor him on a one-to-one basis he does fine, but when he is placed back into the classroom, he falls behind by not doing homework and failing the tests. I attribute this to his laziness and the desire to have all the attention focused on himself and only himself.

I also am presently working with a Spanish-speaking student who has not mastered her arithmetic skills. Mr. S. has started working with her in an arithmetic kit which starts from the beginning of mathematics with simple addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Mr. S. will give her a grade in Basic Algebra IA, instead of in Algebra I. Everyday I have been reviewing the work with her and making sure that she is not having any problems. She is another student who does the work well on a one-to-one basis. I presume that she is lazy too, but she really does lack the skills that it takes to succeed in an Algebra I course.

I think that being able to work with the students individually is an asset to the student. When I tutor a student on a topic that he or she does not understand, I start from the beginning of the chapter and find out where he became lost. I not only help him or her figure out the problem, but I also try to explain why certain rules are applied. One way in which I do this is to show the student other ways of doing the problem and how, without applying a certain rule, a problem could not be solved. I find this approach an effective way to explain the "why?" students always ask.

Thus far, I have enjoyed being a research assistant immensely. I am looking forward to the opportunitity to prepare a lesson myself and present it to the class. I believe that I have gained respect from the students and that they will do their best to make the lesson successful. I have learned a lot from the class and I enjoy being able to help others with what I know. I hope the remainder of the year will be as rewarding as this part has been.

EPILOGUE
THE FUTURE OF ISP

In any given year, twenty to twenty-five seniors are in the Independent Study Program. With the exception of two or three seniors each year, the students go on to four-year liberal arts colleges and maintain average or above average grades. Some attend graduate school: medical school, Ph.D. programs and other areas of concentration.

The northeast region plays a dominant role in the colleges and universities the students select; however, the number of schools in other regions of the country is increasing. Some of the schools selected over the last five years are listed by state or region.

Connecticut

Albertus Magnus College
Connecticut College
Fairfield University
Quinnipiac College
Southern Connecticut State College
Trinity College
Wesleyan University
Yale University
U.S. Coast Guard Academy
University of Bridgeport
University of Connecticut
University of Hartford
University of New Haven
Western Connecticut State College
Western New England College

Massachussetts

Boston College
Boston University
Emerson College
Hampshire College
Harvard University
Lesley College
Mount Holyoke College
Simmons College
Smith College
Tufts University
Williams College
Wheelock College

New Hampshire

Nathaniel Hawthorne College
University of New Hampshire

South

Clark College in Atlanta
Duke University
Hampton Institute
Howard University
Morehouse College

Rhode Island

Brown University
Providence College
Rhode Island College

Middle and Far West

Oberlin College
Purdue University
University of Oregon
U.S. International University in San Diego

Diane Ravitch, assistant professor of history and education at Teachers College, Columbia University, wrote an essay entitled "Blacks' College Gains" in the editorial section of the *New York Times*, July 19, 1976: The ". . dramatic improvement in the number and proportion of blacks in colleges portends an expansion in the number and proportion of blacks in the professions and in managerial positions during the decades to come.

"These socially significant trends reflect tremendous credit on the efforts of the civil rights movements, as well as the wisdom of governmental policies to expand the number of places in public colleges. But perhaps what is most important, the gains of the last ten years are due to the determination of ambitious black students to invest in their future and the willingness of their families to stand behind them even during a period of economic recession."

Her statement and the statistics she presented in the body of her article underline one of the major purposes of the Independent Study Program: to encourage and to prepare students for further education for a future suitable to their talents and their potential. In addition to the recognition of the role of the public sector, recognition of the contribution of private colleges and universities is essential. The list of colleges and universities the students attend is evidence not only of the acceptances offered our students, but also of the substantial financial assistance extended to them. Black and white students in our Program benefit from public and private institutions of higher learning which hold out rewards for fine minds regardless of financial status.

If the attitude of society, exemplified by these schools continues, the work of the Independent Study Program can continue to serve a broad spectrum of students. The future can continue to hold promise and hope.

APPENDIX

A. The Destiny of Humankind by Willie Sessions

B. A Theory of a Sense of Belonging by Tanya A. Taylor

Appendix A

The Destiny of Humankind
by
Willie Sessions

The destiny of humankind is in our hands. We alone must bring humanity to its rightful place: One with The Universal Spirit. Through a natural process concealed in nature, a system is found. This system is our way to unification.

We must advance our world spiritually along with our technological improvement. We can bring humanity to a universal soul and form a link with The Universal Spirit. We have Love as our life's energy.

In the world of atoms there is a unifying system. This system consists of bringing the individual elements into one. There are powerful energies forming bonds between the elements. Here lies the idea which will serve as an analogy to our world, so we can live in a peaceful existence.

In the atomic world the smallest particle with any true identity is the atom. The atoms, the building blocks of matter, have a crucial place in the Universe. The omnipotent actions of the atoms are controlled by a systematic process. In order to understand this process, a description of the structure of the atom is needed.

The structure of the atom begins with the atomic nucleus, which lies at the center of the atom. In the nucleus there are protons and neutrons. The number of protons and neutrons are varied, thus giving diversity to the atoms. On the outer region of the nucleus, electrons revolve on an orbit. The number of electrons equals the number of the protons to give the atom a neutral charge.

Some atoms have a special ability to give and receive electrons. Most atoms have the ability to share electrons. With these characteristics, a proper atmosphere, a proper orientation and sufficient energy, the atoms can merge. As the atoms come closer together, their orbitals form a small overlap giving them a link that is called an atomic bond. The merging atoms construct molecules with perfectly structured designs. This natural convergence is important because the individual atoms need to strengthen themselves. Because of an unfilled outer energy level, most atoms are incomplete. With the completion of filling the outer energy level, these atoms attain a stable electronic configuration of their nearest noble gas. The noble gases, a group of stable atoms, serve as models for the atomic world.

The molecules are also joined together forming a polymolecule, a single object created from the immense number of atoms within it.

This unifying atmosphere of the atomic world is only because of its atomic energies. In describing these energies, the atom to molecule formation and their energies will first be discussed. The atom-atom bonds are made from one electron seeking another electron with an opposite spin. The name given to this bond is covalent (sharing) bonding. The energies between the molecule-molecule bonds, though not as strong as covalent bonding, are important in the formation of polymolecules. These energies, called van der Waals forces of attraction, are characteristic in molecules that are close together.

Even with these attractive and unifying energies, the atomic world contains some forces of tension, which stand in the way of forming polymolecules. For instance, in the atomic nucleus the protons, although being alike, would repel each other if not for the mysterious internucleonic energies which hold them together. So it seems that the attractive forces are more powerful than the repulsive forces.

So here we have the atomic world. Before the analogy to the human world is described, an analysis of the problems facing us today is needed.

Social inequality is the problem of today's world which needs to be overcome. This inequality is derived from the beliefs of superiority and dominance inherited from past civilizations. These beliefs are in the following forms: (a) Racial Superiority, (b) Power Superiority,* (3) Intellectual Superiority, (d) Winners' Superiority, and last but not least (d) Male Superiority. These superiorities must be viewed before our solution is presented.

Racial Superiority began when the primitive beings of the world, a homogeneous society, became a civilized heterogeneous society. With this growth, the formation of groups began. Many times the groups would have need for the same things. When one group satisfied its need, its members would not share what they found. This created tensions between the groups, causing each group to become alienated towards each other. The world became more diversified. With the formation of new groups, new characteristics were also formed within each group. The meaning of "race" came about; coupled with these tensions, fear arose between the groups. A "fear of becoming dominated" was carried on through time and evolved to its present form. Of course,

* Defined as a combination of money and class superiority.

humanity is starting to realize these acts of foolishness must be eliminated if real peace is to exist. So Racial Superority is slowly diminishing, but other forms are still strong like Power Superiority.

Power Superiority, another scale for rating human beings, is caused (in most cases) by the class into which humans are born. These classes, being low, middle, and high, create an unbalanced form of life. As of now approximately ten percent of the world controls 70% of the money and resources. In order to achieve the higher forms of status, humans have to cheat, lie, and sometimes even kill to reach the top. In this money-power hungry world, the majority of people in our world searches for a form of improving itself, but the approach here is too materialistic and unreal for a chance at universal happiness. A sense of unreality is in Intellectual Superiority as well.

Intellectual Superiority is based on the system of "knowledge." When a person is defined as having a higher aptitude, she/he is graded highly and is considered "smart." But if a person is defined as having a low aptitude, she/he is considered inferior as a person. Most people are willing to help the people who are defined as "lower," but must first realize that each human will have a different potential on given subjects and therefore, will perform differently.

This unfair rating system causes walls of tension between people. We need a new system where the measurement of aptitude is rated on how much of the potential a student puts forth. This system would give encouragement to each one and would help advance humanity.

Since no one human will understand everything, no one can truly be superior to anyone else. Every person has something to contribute to our world, so we must look at each other with a feeling of equality and usefulness. Intellectual Superiority is also contained in "Winners' Superiority."

Equality of Humankind: The Equality of Humankind, already in process, is slowly taking form. We need a catalyst to quicken and finish this process and become "One" world. The catalyst is symbolized in the system of the atomic world. First, the mass of people must realize the positive consitituents in equality. Then they will be ready to unite. These people, some who have one or more of the superiority characteristics, will learn to eliminate them when they see the more positive values in equilibrium. We must realize no one is better or worse than anyone else when it comes down to life. Just as the individual atoms group, we must group. The atoms give and receive, when it is needed. Humanity needs to give balance to itself by a similar process.

The unbalance is in the form of the superiority characteristics, which are like an unstable atom needing a complement. As the atoms group, their strength increases. We must utilize the individual elements to construct a united world. This new age of the earth will have a system where there will be no rewards or punishments and no prideful arrogance or shame. Intimidation will be a lost word. We can then have a common goal.

The advancement of humanity will come from our common goal. Individuals will increase their desire to contribute, experiment, and expand instead of competing. Overcoming the dissension in humanity is like overcoming the repuslive forces in the nucleus of an atom, where the attractive forces prevail. Universal Love will be our attracting force. In this new age we will truly have sisterhood/brotherhood of humanity.

Individualism within Equality: Individualism within Equality is vital, if we want to live successfully. It is possible that everyone in an equalized society would think, and act, and maybe look alike. Of course, no one would like to "look in a mirror" forever. How can we avoid it?

Nature, that supernatural entity, uses the process of natural selection to sustain individuality. Natural selection creates a diversity factor in the molecular level of humans. The fingerprint is a most evident fact which gives significance to individuality. So as long as humans walk the earth, individuality needs to stay.

Like the diversity in atoms, we must keep diversity in humanity. When the atoms unite, they strengthen themselves by having a stable electronic configuration like a noble gas. They strengthen themselves from the group. In unification each human will be strengthened. As the atom retains its identity in molecules, humans will also retain their identities as individuals.

In individualism all people will be free of the feelings of inferiority and inadequacy. The fear of failure will fall along with the walls of tension. The motivation, or the spice of life, will be in the desire to be useful up to one's total potentialities. This movement, being on an equalized level rating fair to everyone, will do away with the up-down results of our present life interactions.

With this desire and with the releasing of our tensions, the capacity for thought will arise, with the concentration of human energies. Each human will then be a true individual in our equalized society.

Women as the Gift to the World: From the beginning of time, the qualities of pure love, caring, originating, and sustaining have been associated with women. The qualities of strength, pride, courage, and a sense of dominating love have been associated with men. These beliefs are embedded into the subconscious minds of all people in our society: they are recognized in the conscious minds of all people in our society. What is unrecognized is the fact that without women qualities, the qualities attributed to men would be missing.

Strength, pride and courage were basically the characteristics that a family man had to display against the unknowns

of nature (including other men). Because of the man's head role in providing and protecting his family, he was given the title of the dominating lover, only to help boost his ego as a provider and protector. In a sense, one might say women have been oppressed because of this male role and title. Women's placement in society is foolish. Women are cast down as enslaved dependents. Male superiority must be ended if we are to become unified.

Now we are entering a New Age. We must realize those qualities of pure love, caring, originating, and sustaining that are basic and always have been to the foundations of our world. Even though women should share the relationship with men equally, it must be recognized, that because of their qualities, women are the gift to the world.

The womb held by women is defined as a place where something is developed (a natural process) or generated (brought into existence or genesis). The definition of the word mother is source (origin) and beginning (first action). A goddess is considered a woman with charm (magic power). The earth, or home, is called a goddess, and the motherland a land of origin.

When the question of "where did life begin" comes up, the goddess earth comes into the picture. It is possible that the earth used light energies to syntheize proteins and start what is called the phenomenon of life. The word create (to cause to exist, to continue to be, to sustain life) comes up with the word produce (prolong). The object which serves as an originator is called a fundamental (of central importance) part.

With these special and important abilities, it seems that women are gifted and, therefore, the gift to the world. All the definitions add up to originating and producing. Also, woman, the main cog in a machine called nature, sustains life. There's more to say about women (the gift to the world) but no more needs to be proven.

Even the game called chess, which was made up by men, ranks the queen as the most valued piece.

Omnisynthesis

The problem of humankind centers in the superiorities people display over others. The goal is to establish equality, to recognize individuality and to tap the gifted resources of women that enhance life so that humankind can experience unity on earth and with the Universe. What is the way to reach the goal in view of the problem?

In order to answer this question, broader questions arise that go to the fundamentals of life. Where did the universe emerge from? What created life? What is the thing we call reality? Only by putting the search in the perspective of the universal sphere is it possible to find the way to the peace and security humankind desires.

For thousands of years, humanity has been asking these same questions and others. Many times the answer ended up being "God." The Greeks made myths to describe the phenomenon of the Universe and its actions. Religions were formed along with the process of forming a heterogenous world. Religion is like the backbone of humankind; it supports our beliefs. The name of "God" became diversified, causing conflict and dissension. Some religions believed in polytheism. Bibles and other religious books tried to show that they praised the right "God," but no one gave in to another. Many of these books were unethical and hypocritical. This caused some people to turn towards atheism.

Science entered the picture to try to explain the Universe. Darwin came up with the theory of evolution. This "blasphemy" of religions was unaccepted and conflict arose once more. Many scientists tried to give more and better reasons or theories for the synthesizing of matter and antimatter. The results were the same; either questionable with little possibility or just out of the question totally. There seems to be no way to understand what the real picture is trying to say.

Yet, as in the world of atoms, a system and a design must exist in order for each element to function properly. The Universe is the system in which the goal can be attained. Omnisynthesis is the force in the Universal System; Love is the energy behind Omnisynthesis. This process is everywhere and forever (omni) a force that guides life forward to unity with the Universe and its Spirit (synthesis).

The Universal Spirit is the heart and soul of existence, the source for all that exists. It is the model and the reason for life. Its energy propels life towards discovery of human potential and the physical principles of the universe. Owing to this force, life is evolutionary and accelerating. In accordance with Newton's law of physics, a force on an object gives the object faster movement, life itself is speeding with the force of Omnisynthesis action on it. Humankind always has moved with this force. Now we must realize our power and potential to become unified and stay with Omnisynthesis or move backwards or downhill to destruction. If human life does operate with this force, it can reflect the Universal Spirit and continue to recreate itself in expanding possibilities.

Inneressences

The Inneressences are the reflections of the Universal Spirit. They are invisible, but powerful, human energies. They represent the inside and important qualities of humans. These qualities are always bringing changes in life to higher levels of living, levels that are real because they increase the power of discovering the potential in the human and physical world. They bring about this potential. These energies can direct life to metaphysical levels and place it in the realm of the Universe with universals and ultimates. Only on these highest levels can humankind begin to experience unity with the Universe, with all human beings and within oneself.

If we believe in humanity's power to progress into spiritual togetherness, then we must believe in the soul. Without this belief, we would be forced to think that we are puppets of physical existence and fate. Such a belief would make us feel completely impotent, lacking in any mastery over ourselves or our envrionment. Such a belief would show that life is short and unimportant, that it is meaningless. It would see life as an uninterpreted dream. Death seems inconsistent with one's holding a sense of purpose in life and feeling a sense of belonging or place in the Universe. However, if death were only a part of existence, it would be only a step to something different or better. Anything that exists after death (which can be defined as the end of the biological system) must be powerful, immortal and at the same time, the most important part of humans in their lives.

The belief in death as only part of our existence suggests that the something after death is the soul, the nucleus of all human beings. The soul is that part of the human being which is in touch with the Universal Spirit and its qualities. The energies of Universal Love, Universal Understanding and Ultimate Love can come into life through the soul.

The soul, as the nucleus of each human being, contains the most essential parts of each person. Just as the atom's nucleus is its most important characteristic, the human soul is also our most important characteristic. The stability of each human is determined by her/his soul. The more the soul releases the materialistic values, the closer the soul comes to reality. The soul is real because it is immortal, universal and powerful. There are no temporary tendencies in the soul, like most of the things humanity supposes are real. It is our souls we first join, then our bodies. As our souls join we become One Soul, One Nucleus, and One with the Universal Spirit.

Universal Love will be the cosmic bond between all the people in the world. At the present time, this bond is weak. We must strengthen it by supplying more Love energy; as the energy increases, it will bring about the true beauty in the soul. The idea of Universal Love coincides with sisterhood/brotherhood and world peace. In Universal Love, our soul will become stable as they join and the world will be in equilibrium.

Universal Love asks us to look at our planet as a common home. In a sense we are all related because of our closeness to each other in relation to the distance to the nearest planet. Many times the people on earth are quoted as being "one big family." When people start to realize our universal relationship, the next step is to train our emotions to consider the next person as part of ourselves. Because we care about ourselves, we should also care about the next person. This caring about others is Universal Love, which again is the realization that you and I, she and he, and all of us are in the same home, and that we should love one another because we are all parts of each other.

The problems of today's world can only be overcome by having an ability to understand universally. In order to have this essential ability, we must open our hearts and look at this world in a new way. Universal Understanding will clear up multi-definitions with a single word or phrase. We will reach the fundamental parts of all actions, the essence. Then we will be united in thought and action. The walls of hate will disappear. We will be able to reach out, to touch and to discover. The world of technology will increase at tremendous rates, due to the concentration of our human energies towards one goal. The motivation, or the spice of life will be in the desire to be useful up to one's total potentials. Fulfillment of this desire will be true individual success in a world of equalized souls.

Ultimate Love is the most powerful of energies in the Universe. This love can only be formed between man and woman, whose two souls have surpassed Universal Love, to reach an Ultimate Understanding. It is the same kind of action of two electrons meeting each other in order to create a covalent (sharing) bond. This love is the energy behind life because in this Ultimate convergence woman and man unite to create life through a process that involves feelings that are real and natural. When Ultimate Love is present, woman and man join to become a soul that has only one higher state: Universal Spirit. In marriage people join to become a whole part or complete person. It is the inner desire of all humans to teach a completeness. Through Ultimate Love and Ultimate Understanding, two people can experience this completeness that has only one higher state: unity with the Universal Spirit.

A Final process needs to be at work for unity with the Universal Spirit to occur: communication. Communication through the mass media has helped humankind to become well informed on worldy events. But the metaphysical communication between people has experienced many problems.

The number one problem in communicating with one another is a prejudgmental attitude. Although it is this attitude that helps us relate to each other to a small degree, it also prevents any metaphysical bridge to form between our souls.

When an individual prejudges, he characterizes another person totally unknown to himself. Then it is similar to someone signing a contract without reading what it is all about. The prejudger quickly decides (subconsciously) whether or not to form a metaphysical link between two souls. This attitude interferes with the natural process of meeting a person and discovering the beautiful unknowns of that person. But trying to understand universally (taking time to try and find out the reason for the unpleasant attitudes) can bring people a step closer to completing the communication bridge.

Because a person's feelings and actions come from past experiences, these feelings and actions are usually logical to herself/himself. This means that another person's logic is as

much a part of her/his logic as your logic is a part of you. This is very important for us to realize. If one person characterizes an action as right and another person characterizes it as wrong, both have used what they know best to make this judgment. The two people should get to know each other's side and viewpoint of the story or action. Then they can understand where each other's soul is coming from.

It seems funny that many people have excellent vision, but often see very little. We can really see by reaching out our souls. This reaching out trying to touch one another perhaps can influence others to do the same. This idea of our communicating through the reaching out of the soul has been passed down through history in many forms. Religions are always trying to express this idea. An example is in the Bible when Jesus, the Son of God, was being crucified. He said to his Father, "Forgive them because they know not what they do."

Our own belief in the Bible is not what is important here; what is important is the message of Jesus, sending out his soul to understand the others' souls which were corrupted. They did not know their souls were corrupted. Jesus knew at that instant their ideas were as logical to them as his ideas were to himself. A special kind of patience and toleration is needed to communicate.

In our growing future, it is important for us to realize the potential humanity has for reaching a Universal system of Communication. By reaching this goal, we can become one perfect whole. Finally, we all will see that love is the only magic in the world, and every living creature is a magician.

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If we are in tune with the Universal Spirit through the process of Omnisynthesis, we will experience our center, the soul, with its qualities of Universal Love, Universal Understanding, and Ultimate Love. With these qualities we can open ourselves to true communication and discover each other; our individual potentials and our relatedness.

Love will be our eyes; we will see the soul, Woman and Man will join together to produce life which will progress our world to heights of the miraculous. We will live with the Universal Spirit, and in hand, heart to heart, and soul to soul, in peace.

Appendix B

A Theory of a
Sense of Belonging
by
Tanya A. Taylor

Part I

Introduction

There are many different levels of meaning in analyzing man's journey through life (Birth-Death). People have different personalities; therefore, it's difficult to pinpoint the key source that makes man stand alone and take heed to the world. However, through my readings, research and observations, I have developed my own theory of what I feel is man's most important force to survive his life journey: *a sense of belonging*. I feel man must realize to whom he belongs and where he belongs; he must truly believe, once he has developed and maintained a keen sense of belonging, that this sense will be the foundation of his life. Then everything man does will build, and be an attempt to assure, a sense of belonging.

In developing my theory, I combined material from all my resources. Similar motives of man were discovered by talented psychologists that greatly enriched my knowledge of man and his mind. Some of these motives are: Ernest Becker – "The dominant motive of man is self-esteem,"[1] Sigmund Freud – Man's motive is his satisfaction of sexual instincts,[2] Erik Erikson – Man's desire is to find a sense of identity,[3] and Gerald Patterson – Man depends on rewards for reinforcements for his behavior.[4] However, I feel before man can develop these motives, man must first have some sense of belonging. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to explore and take a close look at my theory from my interpretations, research, and supplementary material from cited authors.

Part II

Definition of a Sense of Belonging

A sense of belonging can be defined in many ways because every man has his own perception of belonging. However, in this section, I shall point out seven essential meanings that involve man everyday.

1. *Being needed by others.* This feeling of interdependency not only involves a sense of belonging, but helps one develop a sense of self-worth, also. Like Becker's theory, many of us develop high self-esteem from being needed.[5]

2. *Participation* can also be the basis of one's belonging. Being with others and taking part brings out certain potentials in many of us. This forms the circle of giving, sharing, and contributing. From the beginning, these three actions were the foundation that developed "social organization" with early man. "You get your recognition from others not on what you take – like the animals, but on what you give."[6]

3. *Being included* is another important sense of belonging that can even affect us emotionally. Freud explains this fact in the "anxiety of separation." Many people fear the separation from loved ones. A child leaving home for the first day of school or when he comes to the age where he has to make all the decisions his caretakers once made for him provides an illustration of the anxiety of separation. This period is, sometimes, a difficult hump to get over. However, one must adapt his sense of belonging to feel he is included whether there or away because he must feel he is never forgotten.

4. Many of us can be with others, but if we do not feel we are *accepted*, we have no sense of belonging within ourselves. Man needs man many times to find himself. Approval, agreement, praise, and acceptance are among the needs man supplies to the other. If one depends on others' opinions first, then this would be his drive to establish high self-esteem and a sense of belonging.

5. Gerald Patterson's theory of behaviorism also is a key to finding a sense of belonging. When we are reinforced with rewards for doing certain things, we will certainly do them again. Just as when we are not reinforced, we will often stop. This reinforcement helps one develop a feeling of *being worthy*. One feels worthy because he has obtained appreciation for his doings. Whereas, if he is not reinforced, but punished for his doings, he will feel shame and doubt if his behavior is right or wrong. This will certainly start to damage his sense of belonging.[8]

6. *Being wanted* is another personal need to feel as if one belongs. This gives one the feeling that he is cared for and loved as a total person, not for a specific contribution. Freud emphasized this in sexual relationships. He recalls man's motive is to satisfy his drives, needs, wants, and sexual instincts.[9] A love object is found but, hopefully, a total relationship starts which relates to interdependency and the belonging of one to the other.

7. Then we come to the most important aspect of belonging: the sense of identity (being a self). Erikson stated that this is man's essential motive in his life cycle.[10] Even my theory (a sense of belonging) would be hard to maintain after a period, without a sense of one's own identity. Man comes to the stage where he must find himself and keep his identity to deal with his surroundings. He must say: "I am I," then "I belong."

In concluding my seven phrases (being needed, being a part of, being included, being accepted, being worthy, being wanted, and being a self) of belonging, I have combined the most important perspectives of a sense of belonging: the care of human personality is man's search and need for a sense of belonging.

Part III

Developing a Sense of Belonging

Man goes through many stages in his life. In developing his senses, there are several changes and obstacles with which he must cope. Therefore, in this section we shall look at the pros and cons of man's developments of a sense of belonging.

With a sense of belonging, one feels secure and safe within himself. He can open up and talk freely among others. Then his giving and contributions are a pleasure as he grows and finds these features of himself become more meaningful to his life.

In the Eight Ages of Man, Erik Erikson stated a positive versus negative reaction to each stage. Each positive reaction—a sense of trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, identity, intimacy, generativity, and integrity,—should develop well in this man if he has a strong inner sense of belonging.[11]

As Becker points out, there are roughly four levels of power and meaning an individual could choose to live by: the Personal (one's "true" self), the Social (one's family), the Secular (one's authorities) and the Sacred (one's creator-God). Many times the questions we ask about our belonging, for instance, "where do I fit the expressions of my talent into society?," is worked out through a combination of the four levels of power and meanings.[12] Man must have some sense of place in society and self-meaning to life.

In a troubled society like ours, we can never overlook the fears and negative aspects of life. Many people are not strong enough to stand the pressures and problems with which they have to deal. We live in a very critical world. The fears of lack of acceptance and lack of approval can be very damaging to the development of one's sense of belonging. One becomes tense and cannot give what he has to offer. As Freud recalls, one builds up defense mechanism of the ego. This task, imposed on the ego, deals with dangers that beset the person and arouse anxiety. Repression, projection, reaction formation, fixation, and regression are some of the most serious kinds of defense mechanisms. However, these mechanisms can be harmful. They distort, hide, and deny fortunate reality; then the personality is not yet fully developed. With too many strong defenses, the personality cannot find its way in society to a sense of belonging. The result is usually a nervous breakdown.[13]

Becker quoted a similar phrase, "Everyone is in a sense—neurotic; we try to build up so many defenses that we actually distort and create the abnormal."[14]

Children can also have some harmful mechanisms, exemplified by Patterson's description of the "aggressive child." The aggressive child has a high rate of being mischievous. He causes problems for himself and others. However, many times, because he feels unwanted and longs for a feeling of belonging, he does these things to get attention. He is creating damage to his personality becuase he is too young to understand the situation. Patterson feels that family members can contribute to helping the child feel he belongs.[15] (This point will be discussed thoroughly in Part IV).

Erikson's negative phases of the Eight Ages of Man come under this section, also. Without a sense of belonging, one could have mistrust, feel shame-doubt, guilt, inferiority, role confusion, isolation, stagnation, and despair.[16] Man has to be very careful of his inner obstacles. His senses should be balanced to protect the destruction of his personality.

As we have pointed out, the development of man's sense of belonging can be crucial. Man has many advantages in developing a sense of belonging, but if he is not strong enough to fight back, when he's down and out, the disadvantages are doubled. Only the striving for strength to fight off these dangers will help to develop a strong sense of belonging.

Part IV

Case Studies

While reading materials and developing my theory, I came across some touching stories of real human beings. Of course, the cases were much longer and complex, but I want to share a brief summary of each one and show how important a sense of belonging can be in the solution to these situations.

1. *The Aggressive Child.* Gerald Patterson discusses this child in his book *Families*. The child is someone who could be right in your own family. As related before, in Part III, the aggressive child is lacking a sense of belonging. His highly aggressive performances are due to the fact that he wants to be noticed and recognized. However, the ways in which he tries to seek a sense of self are all wrong. He creates such chaos within his family and environment that he begins to feel low. With no one being able to deal with him, he is pushed farther and farther away from finding his sense of belonging.

However Patterson feels there is hope for this child. Beginning with careful observations and positive reinforcements, the family can pinpoint the problem and actually help change the behavior of the aggressive child. This is owed to him because everyone deserves a chance to develop a sense of belonging.[17]

2. *The Neurological Crisis in a Small Boy.* This was a case of a boy named Sam, who was treated by Erik Erikson. Sam was about five years old. He was suffering from emotional stress imposed on him by his family. Sam had moved into a new neighborhood (from a ghetto to a suburb, where his family was the only Jewish family), and his parents wanted him to be "a nice little boy" like the Gentiles. For a child with his anxiety and aggressiveness, this behavior was hard. Sam felt limited and had no sense of belonging. However, with the help of Erikson, his parents, and a little effort on Sam's part, he managed to adapt his feelings of belonging to his environment, that he felt he had left behind in his old neighborhood.[18]

3. *The Schizophrenic Child.* Jean was also a patient of Erikson's. She was suffering from a mild case of the "split personality." Jean's mother was very ill when she (Jean) was a baby. All she could remember was talking to her mother through the door of her bedroom in the arms of a rough nurse. This experience left an unbearable mark on Jean. She often blamed her mother's sickness on herself. When she began to see Erikson, the stories she told him seemed funny because her emotions didn't fit with real life situations. She was really lost. That gap between Jean and her mother left her without a true sense of belonging. At a young age like that, one could understand how the child must have felt. Now with Erikson's help, Jean was beginning to make sense of things. After her mother's recovery, Jean and her mother became very close. This relationship was good for Jean. With understanding and care, Erikson and her mother helped Jean recover and regain her sense of belonging. 19

In concluding my case studies, even though these case studies were all critical, these situations happen in varying degrees to man everyday. With new knowledge, we can now name the stages of development, find where problems come, and diagnose them. Fortunately, these cases were all children, who were treated at an early age. A sense of belonging is very important in a child's growing up. It's when man is past the stage of early development that it's really difficult to establish an inner sense of belonging.

Part V

Observations

During this past semester I have been an Assistant Teacher under the ISP Research Assistant Program. In an English class I teach and tutor two Spanish-speaking students. Therefore, I would like to discuss some of my observations that correlate with my theory.

The two Spanish-speaking students are perfect examples. They could not speak a word of English last year. This year they are keeping up with the class. This tutoring and its effects made them feel welcome in our school. Coming to a foreign country to live for the first time can be hard. However, our sessions were set up to help them have a feeling of belonging.

In this class, there are also several juniors with whom I work. However, they are not too exciting to discuss. Their academic level is very low. Therefore, their interests and attitudes are low also. I feel their sense of belonging is not developed the way it should be, whether because of conflicts at home, at school, with friends or for other reasons. However, with love and understanding, I feel the average hard heart can be made soft and gain a sense of belonging.

Part VI

Conclusion

While writing this paper, I have enjoyed exploring the many aspects of a sense of belonging. However, my main concern is man's care for human life. I feel one's life cycle is very precious. Man could enjoy so much more in life if he took his senses seriously. In our nation today, there is so much crime and trouble and fears. People do not take heed to the simple, beautiful things in life. That's what inspired me to develop my theory. There is not enough love going around. If man would do what his heart tells him to do, instead of listening completely to others, he just might love and experience something he wants: *a sense of belonging*.

Footnotes

1. Ernest Becker, *The Birth and Death of Meaning* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1971). p. 65.
2. Calvin Hall, *A Primer of Freudian Psychology* (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1964), pp. 102-103.
3. Erik Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1968), pp. 90-96.
4. Gerald Patterson, *Families* (Illinois: Research Press Co., 1971), pp. 1-3.
5. Becker, pp. 65-74.
6. Becker, p. 3.
7. Hall, pp. 61-70.
8. Patterson, pp. 34-45.
9. Hall, pp. 102-114.
10. Erickson, pp. 128-135.
11. David Elkind, "Erik Erikson's Eight Ages of Man," (*New York Times Magazine*, April 5, 1970), pp. 25-27 ff.
12. Becker, pp. 186-187.
13. Hall, pp. 85-96.
14. Becker, pp. 130-154.
15. Patterson, pp. 123-146.
16. Elkind, pp. 25-27 ff.
17. Patterson, pp. 127-128.
18. Erikson, pp. 25-38.
19. Erikson, pp. 195-205.

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Part II

EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS OF RURAL EDUCATION
FOR THE GIFTED

by

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Educational Problems of Rural Education for the Gifted

The rural environment is defined by its agrarian way of life, meager population, its provinciality, conservatism, and resistence to change. Its agrarian life is evident even when farming is not the main source of income. Although population growth and improved transportation have alleviated some of the difficulties, the essential problems remain.

The following generalizations may prove useful in identifying problems of educating the rural gifted:

Community Climate

1. *Sparse Population.* The total number of gifted students within the rural local educational agency (LEA), even in unified districts, is relatively small. The effort required to create and maintain adequate programs is disproportionately large. (U.S. Education Commissioner Marland's *Report to Congress* reported that rural programs were virtually nonexistent.) Taxpayer resentment of "egghead" programs for small proportions of the student body, coupled with the reluctance of professionals to commit themselves to nonpopular activities, has restricted any increase of opportunities for the rural gifted.

2. *Perpetual Poor Attitude.* The gravitational pull of gifted adults away from rural America and towards urban or suburban living is apt to leave the rural community with a persistent provincial attitude, unsympathetic to achievement in the arts and sciences, or to academic excellence in general. Exceptions are in agricultural science or some other local interest such as mining or forestry. Athletics, leadership, and special musical ability may also be highly regarded.

The myths about gifted students maintain exceptional vigor in the rural environment.

3. *Parental Reluctance.* Parents in the rural areas are even more reluctant than in the city to have their children identified as gifted or talented. Because the community is small, unusual students and their families stand out conspicuously.

Educational Programs

1. *Lack of Group Identification.* Opportunity for interaction of gifted students in the rural community is often reduced. The research seems to indicate that occasional meetings with gifted peers improves socialization and enhances learning. The absence of this opportunity is a crucial deterrent to good programs.

Emphasis in recent years has been on special programs for the disadvantaged, the handicapped, ethnic minorities, and mentally retarded. Both advocacy and programs are more likely when an identifiable group is involved.

2. *Difficulty in Meeting Individual Needs.* If learning is to be individualized in the rural community, the effort, the cost, and the number of people involved is multiplied. Staff members in the rural LEA are often unable or unwilling to adapt to individual needs.

3. *Reduced Access to Resources.* The number of human resources, of institutions and agencies available is extremely low in comparison with population. Rural areas are simply not chosen as sites for museums, theaters, concert halls, universities, laboratories, or industries. And this problem is intensified by the tendency of gifted adults and cultured persons generally to gravitate towards urban and suburban locations.

4. *Lack of Suitable Personnel.* Rural LEA personnel at all levels are often unprepared—philosophically and academically—to meet the needs of gifted students. LEA administration is likely to be attuned to the prevailing community attitudes and therefore unwilling to provide the necessary leadership.

There is already a lack of institutions that prepare the standard certificated teacher to recognize exceptional talent and to design learning experiences that will encourage such talent. It is most unlikely, then, that untrained (in this area) rural teachers would recognize and assess giftedness, and then design and conduct an educational program appropriate for the individual. Few agencies exist that can provide itinerant inservice training adequate to overcome the deficiency.

To summarize, the following is a list of needs that are disproportionately great in the rural setting:

1. Leadership
   - —to improve general community understanding
   - —to reduce teacher, administrator, parent hostility
   - —to overcome organizational inertia and maintain impetus
2. Trained personnel
3. Access to resources (transportation, information, communication, equipment, materials, program models, proper evaluation design, means of assessing abilities, etc.)

Part III

WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR RURAL GIFTED
AND TALENTED CHILDREN AND YOUTH

by

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"Development of Teaching Competencies –
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California State Department of Education

What Can Be Done for Rural Gifted* and Talented Children and Youth

There are practically no research (studies) and almost no guidelines relevant to the provision of special education programs for youth in geographic areas characterized by great space and few people.

Administrators of special education services in these regions face the problem of providing programs for exceptional children without well-developed guidelines defining methods for establishing such services. The more remote the region, the more complex the problem becomes.[13]

These sobering thoughts suggest that, to date, no person or organization has the final answer to this problem. Nevertheless, we might explore some aspects of this problem and establish guidelines.

Gifted-child education in sparsely populated areas is a matter of identifying and placing children in appropriate learning situations. The key concepts are identification, placement, access, involvement, motivation, acquiring higher aspirations, and receiving individualized instruction and opportunities for independent learning. Crucial factors are guidance, small-group counseling, individual counseling, tutoring, seminar programs, and independent study. Access involves exposure to and immersion in a responsive, organized, and meaningful learning environment.

What are the characteristics and needs which distinguish the rural gifted from the other rural students—or for that matter, from their more advantaged intellectual peers in urban communities? What provisions for learning should and can be made for children in the upper two-to-five percent of general mental ability and/or talent who live on farms and in rural communities?

Identification of Rural Gifted Children and Youth

If you treat an individual as he is, he will stay as he is, but if you treat him as if he were what he ought to be and could be, he will become what he ought to be and could be.
—Goethe

When you find the gifted child in a rural or low-density populated area he or she may be (1) isolated from intellectual stimulation and from learning resources; (2) unsophisticated—uninformed, lacking in social and learning skills; and (3) deprived culturally and educationally.

We should be able to value this child as a human being who is open to a range of learning experiences, new relationships, new experiences, and exploration of self, environment, and the world. Here may be an individual who has had many opportunities to reflect, and who is free from pseudo-sophistication. Such a person may also have special understanding of nature, having established meaningful relationships with the natural environment.

Underachieving gifted students may sometimes be noted by traits of perseverance, an ablity for association of subjects, creativity, speed of learning, problem-solving ability, the ability to abstract, and by the nature of questions asked by the students. It is possible to note how they respond to open-ended questions and problems that have no right or wrong, or just one answer. Some of these traits may be observed in the process of individual testing. Others may be ascertained in the regular classroom or while the students are talking with or playing with friends. Helpful, too, are reports from parents on early development and learning, with indications of a wide range of interests (possibly, many undeveloped) and a dislike of drills. This person may be restless, bored, lacking in tact in criticizing others, and possibly very critical of self. There may be a tendency for the child to associate with older children and adults.

Many of the gifted are thought to be underachievers when seen in terms of their own potentialities.[14] This may be for a host of reasons ranging from educational deprivation to sibling and parent relationships or to ridicule and hostility sometimes shown them by insecure teachers and chronological peers.

By observing how a child approaches assigned tasks, by noting response to questions and environment, and by watching the child at play and in games, much can be learned about his or her ability or potential. Following observation in both informal and structured settings, academic and intellectual potential may be assessed or inferred by responses given to standardized tests of ability and achievement.

* When the term "gifted" is used alone in this paper, the concept "gifted and talented" is meant—academic, kinesthetic, creative, and psychosocial.

GUIDELINES
Identification of Gifted and Talented Children
In Sparsely Populated Areas

1. Early evidence of:

____1.1 School related learning
____1.2 Maturation
____1.3 Active and persistent exploration of environment
____1.4 Imitation of adult behavior
____1.5 Questioning of established ways of doing things or of assignments and directions

2. Unusually resourceful in coping with:

2.1 Responsibilities

____2.11 Home
____2.12 School
____2.13 Work
____2.14 Community
____2.15 Other

2.2 Opportunities

____2.21 Access to resources
____2.22 Free and/or unstructured time
____2.23 New environments
____2.24 New experiences
____2.25 Other

2.3 Deprivations

____2.31 Economic
____2.32 Social
____2.33 Expression, information, planning, communication, exploration
____2.34 Cultural
____2.35 Educational

2.4 Problems, Frustrations, and Obstacles

____2.41 School
____2.42 Home
____2.43 Social
____2.44 Other

2.5 Lack of Structure and Direction

____2.51 No closure
____2.52 Poor or irrational organization of:
- ____2.521 Time
- ____2.522 Work tasks
- ____2.523 Learning experiences
- ____2.524 Social experiences

2.6 Overly structured settings

____2.61 With no or few opportunities to explore alternatives
____2.62 With overemphasis on rigid expectations and with rigid role performance
____2.63 With no or few opportunities to do things in new ways

3. Playful with:

____3.1 Materials
____3.2 People (interpersonal relations)
____3.3 Ideas
____3.4 Other things

4. Sense of humor (Describe)

5. Products (List)

6. Achievements (List)

7. Skills (List)

8. Scores on intellectual ability tests:

____8.1 Scores compared with norms for culturally disadvantaged children
____8.2 Nonverbal score as compared with verbal score

9. Intelligence/achievement scattergram profiles and aptitude test scores

10. Ratings on maturation profiles; e.g. Gesell

I would like to think that identification procedures grow out of experience and observation in the home and community as well as in the school. Of notable value are case study or child study procedures. These means assure that all pertinent evidence of ability is considered in determining which children should be identified as gifted and talented and should be provided therefore with differentiated learning experiences.

Case-study and child-study procedures are important in identifying the gifted and talented and in placing them in individualized and appropriately differentiated program options. Organized data and recommendations resulting from these procedures may be used to tailor instruction to the needs of those pupils. Likewise pupil progress data in the case study can be used in evaluating both pupils and programs.

Identification procedures should be tailored to behavioral definitions of gifted and talented. "A gifted child is one who. . . A talented child is a child who demonstrates talent by. . ." Behavioral expectancies and behavioral characteristics may in fact vary between rural and urban settings.

Needed is a clearer delineation of characteristics, learning and experiencing requirements, and other factors resulting solely or mainly from geographical (as distinguished from just social) isolation. Some of the same indices of advanced ability may be applicable to children isolated within the ghettos of our cities or trapped within other provincial confines of experiencing exploration and thinking.

This treatment of identification of the rural gifted suggests certain characteristics and procedures. There still is need for considerable research and development in the area of identifying and educating the gifted "in geographical areas characterized by great space and few people."

Access

Federal, state, and county school personnel should help local teachers and administrators provide access or avenues for pupils to the experiences, environments, persons, ideas, material, and equipment through transportation of persons, shipment of material and equipment, voice transmission, voice and image transmission, and correspondence.

Transportation

Transportation of persons involves taking gifted children to gifted children, to gifted adults, to special learning environments, and to cultural sources. It might be by car, jeep, bus, railroad (regular or logging), light plane, helicopter, boat, airline, or even trail.

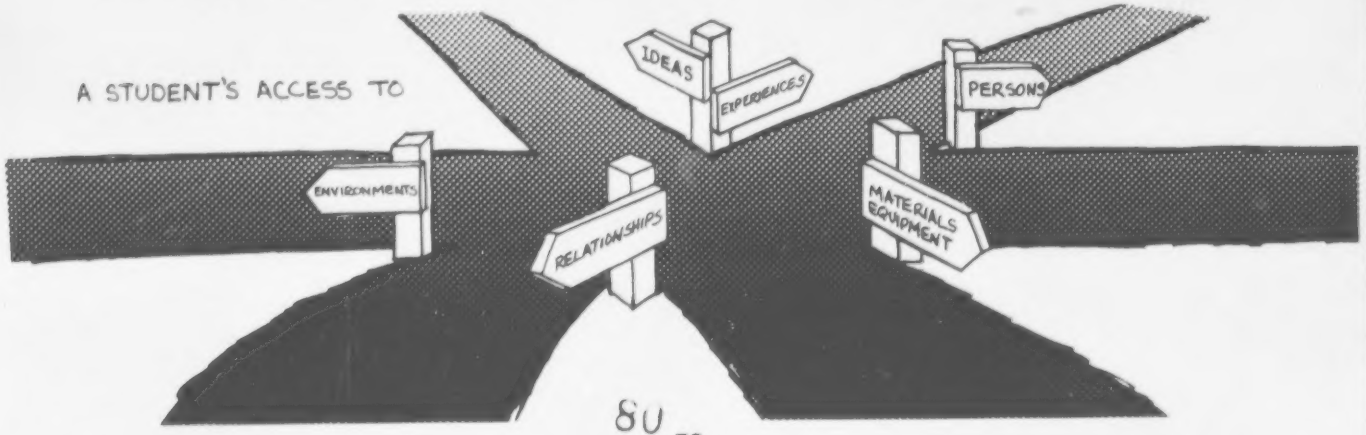
Transportation could be provided for the purposes of reaching sources of involvement, motivation, exploration of interests, aspiration raising, instruction and learning individualization, guidance, and self-understanding. Other purposes served are (1) finding models of exemplary adults—persons who are exemplary as human beings—as thinking individuals, as creators, and as career leaders, and (2) finding models of other children who have adapted to and who flourish in cities or in the country. These may be children who have overcome some of the factors inhibiting learning and development in rural areas, developed broad interests, benefited by being with other gifted children and gifted adults, raised their levels of aspiration, and whose current achievement is rather remarkable considering their isolation and/or cultural deprivation.

Voice and Image Transmission

The spoken word or voice transmission is probably best accomplished through telephone lines and recording tape. Voice and image transmission can be accomplished through educational television; slides and correlated recording tapes; 8mm films and recording tapes, slides or motion picture films plus synchronized recording tapes, and phonograph records; and/or telephone conversations. Also important may be the use of pictures, photographs, and charts, together with recording tapes, records, and telephone equipment.

Correspondence

Not to be overlooked as a means of transmitting ideas is correspondence with other gifted children, with gifted and talented adults, and with a sponsor or mentor. Correspondence courses are also effective means of transmitting knowledge and ideas, especially when the child has an opportunity each week to discuss the work with an adult.



Gifted children need access to persons, experiences, relationships, materials, and ideas for extending awareness. They need books, records, learning kits, laboratory equipment, data storage and retrieval devices, and data manipulation devices. They need to be introduced to persons who can meet them in a human-to-human encounter, are especially knowledgeable, possess constructive discontent, tend to play with ideas, and who create new ideas and other products as a result of their own sensitivity to problems, flexibility, fluency, and originality.

In addition to access to transportation, telephone lines, television, recording tapes, and letters, it is important to have the gifted child involved with other gifted children; with knowledgeable, inspiring, empathic, and possibly creative adults; and with new ideas about themselves, school, vocations, and their world. Another important factor is motivation for self-assessment, self-definition now and gradually changing in an expanded world made possible through special programs, an internal locus of evaluation, and also recognition by significant persons.

Motivating Rural Gifted and Talented Children

Some methods of motivating gifted and talented children are:

1. Provide opportunities for them to play with, experiment with, and compete with intellectual peers.

2. In a playful, free, accepting environment, encourage expressions of feeling, clarification of ideas, divergency of thought, and originality.

3. Foster skills of extrapolation, analysis, of generating ideas, adaptive flexibility, expressional fluency, and synthesis.

4. Provide guidance-oriented counselor and/or teacher time with the emphasis upon human being-to-human being relationships and upon the child and adult valuing each other and exploring the parameters of their existence (be a mentor).

5. Entrap these children with interest expanding materials and experiences, engaging books, experimental equipment, audio-visual materials, "do-it-yourself" projects, and independent study.

6. Possibly, just as the final bell is about to ring at the end of the school day, confront the gifted child with optional problems to grapple with overnight or during a weekend.

7. Make it possible for the child to plan gradually where, with whom, and for what purposes he or she will spend part of each school day.

Additional means of motivating gifted and talented are: encourage them to question, to experiment, and to explore; awake interest in hobbies, examine and define concepts and ideas; focus attention upon process and skills (e.g., steps in creative problem solving); and resist the temptation to evaluate every act and every product.

Individualization of instruction can be achieved through inservice education which develops in teachers' techniques for using case study data as a basis for curriculum planning and for using knowledge about the traits of the typology of the gifted in planning for the development of higher intellectual skills and specific aspects of creativity.

Paul R. Ackerman did a study of the significance of "a consultant-teacher for the gifted" in rural areas.[1] Almost all of the rural gifted children in the Ackerman study were underachievers. They were provided with a resource room in which they carried out projects during two-hour blocks of time and under the supervision of a person who was a teacher-consultant of the gifted. The children were given two seminars. These emphasized academic planning and skill-building and provided sutdents with an opportunity to examine such topics as "How Knowledge Progresses" and "The Tools of Achievement." Part of the time of the teacher-consultant was spent with an independent studies program. The rest of the time was spent in assisting teachers to enrich their classes for gifted students.

The study also showed that independent study should follow an initial period of structure and discipline and that remediation of academic background and study skills is necessary before attempting to have an integrative curriculum. In order to establish rapport and to reduce professional resistence to a program such as this, it was necessary to have an intensive inservice education program involving the teacher, consultant, and the faculty.

State Programs

Stimulated by U.S. Office of Education activities since 1972, by activities of the National/State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and the Talented, and by parents, the state departments of education and state legislatures are fostering identification of appropriate learning opportunities for the gifted/talented.

Several years ago California legislators removed a restrictive 110-mile limitation on educational trips for the gifted when presented with a map which showed that the limitation precluded children in 2/3 of the state from major centers of culture and advanced learning.

State programs may train teachers, assist administrators, and provide the gifted/talented with access and involvement in a wide range of experiences, including experiences in different social, political, economic, and geographical environments. By setting standards and providing financial incentives, states determine the quality and extent of individualization. By serving as an advocate for rural gifted, state personnel ensure access, involvement and sufficient motivation of these children.

What Federally-Supported Teacher Centers Might Do to Establish and Improve Programs for the Gifted and Talented

Section 153(a) of the Educational Amendments of the Higher Education Act of 1976 "authorizes the Commissioner of Education to make grants to local educational agencies to assist them in planning, establishing, and operating teacher centers. . .for teachers in public and non-public schools. The centers would (1) provide teachers with the opportunity to develop and produce, with the assistance of consultants and experts, curricula designed to meet the educational needs of the persons in the community, area, or state being served, and (2) provide training to improve the skills of teachers to meet the educational needs better of the persons they serve and to familiarize the teachers with the developments in educational research and curriculum, including the use of research to improve teaching skills."[5] Many hope that some of the available funds (to be determined) will provide Center opportunities for teachers of the gifted.

Personnel from the Centers might exert leadership in talent development and gifted child education. Some suggested activities for these persons are:

1. Explore the area of gifted child education with groups of interested administrators. Develop multi-county regional approaches for planning and conducting differentiated learning programs for the gifted in sparsely populated areas.

2. Prepare packets for administrators which contain such things as suggested goals, identification procedures, research techniques, suggestions for administrative planning, and curriculum development.

3. Work with school districts in preparing teaching guides, special kits and other resource materials.

4. Develop a roster of resource persons who are available to teachers and students.

5. Establish demonstrations at the Teacher Center, in school districts, and at institutions of higher education.

Centers might be involved in the production of educational television programs on "great ideas" and other suitable topics, tele-lecture, improvement of tele-teaching techniques, and the creation of a bank of videotapes on diagnostic, prescriptive, and instructional skills involving taxonomically based improvements of higher intellectual and creative ability; in sponsoring newsletters on creative ideas, creative teaching, and how to foster creativity in children; in preparing or advising school personnel on the purchase of special kits and other materials on concept development, literature enrichment, or reading improvement. (Helping them in the selection of books for children with searching minds and creative thoughts.)

Other important "Center" contributions might be: development of cooperative-contractual summer schools for the gifted which focus on cultural improvement, skill development, independent study and research; the design and coordination of seminar programs for high school students which would involve scientists, businessmen, physicians, engineers, military, forest-management, river-management, and college personnel; and the promotion of Saturday programs for students who live in isolated areas. These programs might provide certain material and equipment, resources, opportunities, and special personnel not available during the week. Such programs involve persons whose work week is usually Monday through Friday. Students are either bussed to specialized learning situations (e.g., computer facilities) or specialists (happy to escape from the city for a weekend) drive or fly to rural areas. Finally, Center personnel might build public understanding through county fair exhibits, PTA councils, service organizations, and newspaper articles; and portray the positive effects which special provisions for the gifted often have upon the total educational program. Help district personnel develop or become competent in using procedures for evaluating programs.

In addition to the suggestions above, Teacher Centers might foster exchanges of library materials and open-ended, enriched team teaching programs in which teachers are used as specialists and in which pupils are not confined to the usual grouping in mathematics and reading. Personnel in the Centers might study the possibility of bringing gifted and talented children (underachievers and/or achievers) into group-guidance summer programs or into other programs in which they are allowed to explore ideas in the presence of intellectual peers and in which they have had the chance to examine some of their own thinking about themselves and their world. Consideration should also be given to the feasibility of conducting tele-teaching seminars—originating on college campuses—in which "great books" are analyzed from different perspectives by a social psychologist, anthropologist, historian, literary critic, and/or scientist. Tele-teaching seminars could be coordinated with periodic meetings of gifted and talented students on a campus of an institution of higher education. Other ideas to consider might be the provision of dial-access to data, courses, and materials of cultural enrichment.

Teacher Centers might mobilize the needed resources for planning and implementing "total approaches to full development of human beings."

Institutions of Higher Education

Colleges and universities have made special contributions to talent development through providing special programs for intellectually gifted youth, use of equipment and facilities, teacher training and inservice education, summer workshops, laboratory schools, guidance workshops focusing upon techniques for counseling and guiding gifted and

highly-gifted children, provision of resource and consultant personnel, and research and experimentation in motivation, learning theory, instructional procedure, appropriate material, and structure of groups.

Institutions of higher education might become regional bases for scanning research and practice, developing model programs; cooperatively field testing these programs, revising them, and helping school districts in installing and institutionalizing these programs.[8] Schools of education might become "epicenters" for preparing model resource units and pupil materials which promote educational objectives, classroom dialogue, assignments, examination questions and curricular materials that advance higher intellectual skills and specific aspects of creativity. Setting an example in this matter, college entrance examinations, undergraduate and graduate teaching, and interviews of candidates for advanced degrees might emphasize these skills and traits. Another idea is that college learning experiences be initiated at those points where previous self-initiated or high-school-led inquiry and instruction ended. Aiding this effort might be policies for advanced standing and use of college-level proficiency examinations in granting credits as well as placement in advanced sections or advanced courses.

College and university personnel might coordinate preparation and implementation of federal projects to advance creativity in education, mobilize resources to back up teachers and instructional programs, and become focal points for developing and testing "total approaches to full development of human potential." They might also develop regional counseling and guidance programs for gifted children and youth. These could provide opportunities for these children to raise their levels of aspiration and make a significant impact upon improving the sophistication of teachers and quality of education in rural areas.

Regional counseling programs might be patterned after the center developed at the University of Wisconsin and formerly directed by John Rothney. This center assisted in the identification, assessment, and counseling of gifted youth. These youth were allowed to visit classes at the university, bring their own creative work for criticism, and talk with various members of the faculty. Some of the latter served as sponsors for these children. The college also assisted guidance personnel and teachers in the school from which the gifted children came.

Teacher training programs could use self-assessment procedures, instruction and internships for preparing teachers who would be cognizant of the needs and capable of developing the oftentimes latent abilities of these children. Perhaps a teacher-referral service might be started which would give rural teachers immediate answers to perplexing questions about what to do for underachieving, high-academic achieving, and highly creative children and youth.

It should be possible to design multi-disciplinary summer workshop-demonstration-observation programs that are especially effective in preparing teachers to develop talented and gifted youth in sparsely populated areas. Joining this endeavor might be a rural sociologist, educational psychologist, and curriculum constructionist. This program would be enhanced by the requirement of an individual-teacher, consultant, or counselor project that would be of practical use in the fall.

Independent Study for Teachers of Rural Gifted and Talented

Needed, certainly, are opportunities for rural teachers to gain insights into and skills for employing diagnostic, prescriptive, and instructional techniques which are most approporiate for the gifted and talented. "Development of Teaching Competencies – Gifted and Talented" is a Section 404, Public Law 93-380 grant to the State of California which offers taxonomically- and competency-based training through regional and local workshop. Also offered is a cassette-based Independent Study Course prepared and disseminated by the Extension Division of the University of California. The course is planned to meet prioritized teaching improvement needs for teachers in rural areas.

In my opinion, an Independent Study Course for Teachers of Rural Gifted Children and Youth should contain the following fifteen components:

1. Rationale and historical background of programs for the gifted and talented
2. Definitions
3. Needs and characteristics of gifted and talented children
   - – in general
   - – in rural settings
4. Vignettes
   - – of gifted and talented children in general
   - – of rural gifted and talented children
5. Identification of gifted and talented children and special problems and methods of identifying the gifted who live in rural communities
6. Development of "qualitatively different" and "uniquely appropriate" experiences and program options such as *access* to special experiences and environments, to certain persons, ideas, materials, and equipment
7. Promotion of *involvement* with other gifted children and with knowledgeable, inspiring, empathic, and creative adults
8. Taxonomic approaches for full development of intellectual and creative competencies of individuals*

* See chart (p. 84) "Higher Intellectual Skills and Traits of Creativity."

9. Strategies for *motivating* learning of gifted and talented children who live in rural communities

10. Preparing lesson plans (objectives, classroom questions, assignments evaluation, and reward systems) and curriculum–based upon the taxonomy of educational objectives (cognitive domain) and the structure of intellect

11. Involvement of all teachers and administrative staff

12. Involvement of communities and parents

13. Raising the qualitiy of total educational programs through programs for gifted and talented, as a spinoff

14. Evaluation
    - 14.1 Earmarks of a qualitatively different program
    - 14.2 Measurable and/or observable objectives
        - 14.21 Program administration
        - 14.22 Pupil progress

15. Avenues to further professional growth
    - 15.1 Inservice education
    - 15.2 Special summer opportunities

These fifteen items should probably be arranged under five to seven categories. The titles of the categories could have a fresh and even an inspiring aspect to them. Perhaps, descriptors and titles would not contain pedantic, prosaic, and "tired" (and "tiring") words and phrases. One caution: keep the "teaching-improvement" course teacher-oriented and not administrator-oriented. Teachers need practical help through which they can become more sophisticated educators and more effective persons. They generally do not need extensive orientation on regulations and administrative procedures.

Teachers of rural children may also acquire useful knowledge about the gifted and talented from *Self-Directed Study Guide on the Gifted and the Talented* published by the Ventura County (California) Superintendent of Schools Office for the National/State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and Talented.

In essence, we might say that colleges and universities can take steps to understand the uniqueness of children in the typology of the gifted, make special efforts to attract these children to college campuses, and prepare teachers who are especially well-qualified to work with these children. These institutions can mobilze financial support, engage in regional planning, and conduct significant developmental activities to improve the calibre of teaching and of educational programs at elementary, secondary, and higher-education levels. More meaningful teacher preparation programs, new pupil and professional materials and demonstration centers which foster diffusion and adoption of worthwhile innovations may result. Another important task is that of preparing program evaluators and more effective instruments for assessing gifted-child programs. This cadre of evaluators and new assessment instruments might see, portray, and analyze gifted and creative youth in the full aspect of their being and encourage full development of their potentialities.

Administrative Involvement and Support

Teachers who are differentiating learning activities for the gifted and talented need the full backing of school principals and district-level consultants, psychologists, and superintendents. One opportunity for the administrator is to use programming for the gifted and talented as the "cutting edge" for assessing and improving pupils and teachers, of creating a relevant needs-based curriculum, and of gaining support of community members and leaders. (Programs for the gifted thrive in California because of the involvement of parents and communities.) Another task of the administrator is to show that it is just as defensible to put additional resources into developing bright minds as it is to develop physical prowess in football players.

To interpret a program adequately requires participation. An administrator might teach several sessions to gifted and talented children in his or her particular field of expertise, hold seminars on problems of American education, and/or be involved in a creative problem-solving activity along with a class or group of gifted children. Other ways of supporting the program are to free the teachers to locate out-of-school materials or learning opportunities, to help a "teacher-support" parent group to form and to function, and to recognize the vast amount of extra planning time required of teachers of the gifted.

One promising administrative challenge is to design and implement integrative education for pupils, teachers, and parents. Integrative education would involve them in learning, inservice education activities, and in adult education (even correspondence) activities in creative problem-solving to encourage application of these new-found skills not only to school-related tasks but to all phases of living and community life.

A Proposed Regional Summer Honors Program for Gifted and Talented Youth – Rural and Urban

Location

A Regional Summer Honors Program for Gifted and Talented Youth might be located as a separate residential school on a campus of a college or university–or it might be located within given school districts that qualify for recognition as part of the honors program. In the first case, it might be appropriate to select a cluster college that has dining facilities, classrooms, laboratories, lecture halls, and cultural displays within a compact area. Campus or school district locations might be established in nine regions of the United States.

Selection of sites at given school districts could be

accomplished through competitive application procedures. Among the criteria for selection woud be that programs include (1) performance objectives for the development of specific cognitive, affective, creative, leadership, visual and performing arts, psychomotor, and academic skills. (2) activities, experiences, and curriculum related to the objectives, (3) uniquely appropriate materials, equipment and facilities, and (4) evaluation procedures and instruments for evaluation of pupil progress and of operational-administrative aspects of the program in light of the stated performance objectives and of observable and measurable levels of attainment.

Participants

Participants would include teachers who are specially recognized and accepted through openly competitive submission of unique course designs, and students selected on an openly competitive basis involving a review of past achievements including special creative products. Each residential school would house 100-200 sophomores, juniors, and seniors—approximately 50 percent girls and 50 percent boys. Teacher and student candidates would be admitted from both private and public schools.

Program Elements

As presently envisioned, the Honors Program would be run for five-to-six weeks. It would be administered by public school personnel in cooperation with civic groups and parent organizations, industry, research and development organizations—public and private, and associations of professional educators in areas of art, music, humanities, science, mathematics, and English.

Program elements would include:

1. Oceanographic surveys and studies—including time as student and research assistant on an oceanographic ship

2. Music festivals (e.g., Bach, Beethoven, "country" and jazz)

3. Artistic creation and/or appreciation for all students and teachers involved in the program—products to be judged by resident or visiting artists, musicians, architects, and other experts

4. Research facilities—to be observed and to be used by students and teachers

5. Individual contracts to do creative work—to write a book, to compose a musical compositon, to invent a machine, to paint, to write and publish a book of poetry, to draft new legislation, to "value engineer" an industrial or business enterprise, or to improve a department or agency of state government.

6. Internships—to do legislative research (as an intern), to do research for the Governor's or for a legislator's office, to do research for a department of state government

7. Seminars on techniques of creative problem solving and of value engineering

8. Workshop: "Innovative design of public education in the state of _____"—involving practical applications of creative problem solving techniques to the problems and needs of the particular state

9. Career-exploration program—including computerized counseling involving retrieval of vocational information and vicarious exploration of careers

10. Dialogues with resident creative persons—artist (painter or sculptor), musician (performer or composer), architect, author, governmental planner, and industrial designer, all in residence

11. Prominent guests (one-day, two-day, or weekly)—the Governor; Senators and Assemblymen; Superintendent of Public Instruction: scientists, (e.g., ecologists, oceanographers, and aerospace engineers; and federal leaders and other nationally prominent persons)

Further opportunities for differentiated learning would be offered in these additional honors program components:

12. Technological invention—including applied research on problems furnished by business

13. Astronomy and meteorology—observation and instruction

14. Weekly tours of cultural events, science research laboratories, industrial production, and other facilities

15. Briefings by federal and state department diplomats coming to Washington and going to their assigned posts

16. Two-day culminating conference—to include symposiums, discussions, and presentation of plans for solution of state and national problems, displays of creative products, and performance of newly composed musical compositions

17. Governor's or Legislator's Day—to involve, in part, a special "day" when the honorees would be in attendance

18. Competition in academic skills such as rapid reading and mathematical calculation—some publicity might be given to dramatic improvement of individuals and groups

19. Philosophy seminar

20. Workshop on computer programming

21. Multi-disciplinary seminars

22. Multi-media production and filmstrip workshop

Contributions

It is anticipated that business and industry would make significant contributions to the success of the Honors Program through lending personnel and equipment and through providing vocational information—including employee specifications for present and possibly future careers.

Recreation

Recreation would include weekend trips to mountains and seashore, competitive sports (swimming, tennis, running, shotput, discus, and javelin), and instruction in certain sports such as tennis, and sailing.

Per Diem

Students and teachers at a residential school could be provided a basic per diem in addition to room and board.

Incentive

A key aspect of the Honors Program would be special incentives—not only for students, but also for teachers. Students would be eligible for internships (government, business, industry, and professions) and would receive assistance in securing scholarships, patents, copyrights, and royalties. Prizes (including scholarships) would be awarded for creative products. Teachers would receive professional recognition for being an Honors Program participant; recognition for student achievement; grants for advanced education and training; the status of State Department of Education Associate, college associate, and business associate; and prizes for creative products. Special certificates for participating students and teachers would be awarded by the Governor, a leader of the Legislature, or by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

A Regional Summer Honors Program for Gifted and Talented Youth contains within it the potentiality for "full development of human beings." Through a broad spectrum of creative and exploratory activities, dialogues with eminent persons, cultural events, and other summer program experiences, participants can gain a better understanding of themselves and the world in which they live. They can acquire a foundation of thought and experience which will guide them toward joyful, productive, and meaningful living. They can become more rational and compassionate human beings.

Rural Programs

1. The rural California Counties of Plumas and Siskiyou have in the past offered summer group-counseling and instructional programs which have benefited gifted children by helping them and others to know themselves, develop higher career aspirations, sense the value of school, and emerge from a cocoon of underachievement. While programs such as these oftentimes are generated by sparks from a few dedicated individuals and readily fade away when these individuals are removed from the scene, they have great merit. Future attempts along this line might employ group-counseling and assessment procedures which were developed during three and one-half years of the counseling-instructional program demonstration of California Project Talent (1963-1966).

2. Weekend exploration trips such as those formerly conducted in Tuolumne County (California) were a great boon as intellectual and creative stimulation. Experts both from big cities and from the immediate environs lectured, discussed things seen on the trips, and talked with individual boys and girls. The gifted met intellectual peers (children and adults) in programs which opened up new vistas of understanding and new aspirations. On one trip, these children from a number of grades talked with a geologist from the San Francisco Bay Area the night before the field trip and on the field trip talked with and listened to the director of a fish hatchery; peered into a microscope at algae collected from fishponds; heard a psychologist who was also an expert on algae talk about a number of important things; questioned key engineers at the construction site of the Early Intake of the Hetch Hetchy Water System—which supplies San Francisco with water; saw generators, turbines, and control devices at Cherry Power House; and listened to a forest ranger talk about the ecology of the area.

3. Some students in rural counties of California see and compare major ecological settings. Some very isolated gifted have exchanged places for a week with their counterparts in large city and metropolitan areas.

4. Project Prometheus, a Title III ESEA project, gave gifted students in seven southern rural counties of Oregon a six-week summer program which emphasizes development of creative leadership and a rich humanistic-social-science base for value exploration. The latter was provided by creative teachers who were carefully screened and then given free rein and maximum administrative support. "The (summer) school provided a woven matrix of experience and concept for its student population in a five-strand construct involving lecture-demonstration, conversational dialogue, interdisciplinary classes, cultural experiences in the fine arts, and weekend tours."

5. Yakima Valley, Washington Enrichment Seminars, and various Ohio Seminars have been examples and provided guidelines for rural program development.

6. Stanislaus County, California has emphasized a community sponsor program—a gifted adult in tune with and relating with a gifted child.

7. The PACE (Title III ESEA) Center at Chico, California—evidenced interest not only in planning and developing programs for rural gifted and talented children and youth—but has designed a complementary program to aid the regional economy. It hopes the Center for Utilization of Resources Effectively (CURE) will have a salutory impact on the economy and culture of the area, as well as upon its education.

8. Mentioned above in this paper is the resource room and resource teacher program used in Kansas.

9. Because of its impact on rural underachieving gifted, a list of this nature should mention that some of the southern states have dared to think about the possibilities of residential

school on a short- or long-term basis. Although this concept runs into strong philosophical and emotional opposition, initial efforts seemed promising.

10. In a federal publication, *Talent—A State's Resource, A State's Responsibility* (OE-20048; Bulletin 1963, No. 34), are listed the following efforts to provide more effective opportunities for the gifted in small schools:

"(1) The Western State Small School Project, operative in Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, Nevada, and Colorado and financed by the Ford Foundation ($750,000 for three years), includes the establishment of provisions for the gifted in both elementary and secondary schools.

"(2) The Catskill Area Project in small school design, Oneonta, New York, permits several individuals or small groups of pupils to work on different subjects at the same time, within the same room, under the guidance of the same teacher.

"(3) Some countries, such as Australia, find it feasible to use two-way radios to improve educational offerings, particularly for the gifted, in remote rural areas.

"(4) A proposal, not yet implemented, has been made that advanced placement courses for college credit be given by correspondence to rural school youth."

Listed above are a few promising programs. Some of the ideas and programs may deserve replicating or modifying and presenting in demonstration settings complete with electronic wizardry—and also in settings devoid of "newfangled gadgets" and which require ingenuity in the use of commonly available materials. *The UNESCO Source Book for Science Teaching*,[16] *Kitchen Physics*,[12] and other kits of correlated audio and visual materials[3] may be used in this latter approach. With a minimum of searching, the educator can locate an array of social science, science, mathematics, art, music, and English materials suitable for independent study. These might be important aspects of well-planned, sequential, and meaningful individualized programs for gifted children and youth in sparsely populated areas.

The Situation Now in California

There are over 200,000 gifted children in California in 325 school districts. Solid research undergirds program prototypes, characteristics of the gifted, and program development. The latter has been aided by developmental and dissemination activity in California Project Talent, by conceptual research on the human intellect and creativity, by additional funds made available through NDEA and ESEA, by administrative workshops sponsored by the National/State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and the Talented, and by the 1976-77 Section 404, Public Law 93-380 Project: *Development of Teaching Competencies—Gifted and Talented*. Particularly important have been demonstrations of the value of a typological approach in the education of these children.

Gradually appropriate provisions for the gifted are being made in states from Hawaii to Georgia and from Minnesota to Texas. Factors influencing program development are the work of professional organizations and the work of state directors of programs for the gifted. Interesting to note is the sense of community which unifies efforts of professional educators in the education of the gifted and talented.

The Dream

Perhaps now, at last, we are coming closer toward realizing the dream of full development of human potential and of extending the creative and intellectual resources and abilities of all persons—school administrators, teachers and parents, as well as children. We are moving beyond performing roles decreed by society to an existence in which we are more rational, more creative, and more humane persons in our own right.

Eric Fromm has written "Most People Die Before They Are Fully Born" and "Creative Living Means to Be Born Before One Dies." To be born before we die means that we become professionals—not merely technicians, that we become sensitive, broad experiencing, and fulfilled human beings. It means that we expand our awareness and our lives not merely as educators but as creative, rational, and humane persons.

Figure I

Assessment of

HIGHER INTELLECTUAL SKILLS AND TRAITS OF CREATIVITY

Which Are Systematically Developed in Uniquely Appropriate Programs for Mentally Gifted Minors

We can improve the quality of teaching and learning by designing and implementing educational objectives, classroom dialogue, assignments, criteria for preparing curricular materials, examination questions and reward systems which stimulate growth or improvement of higher intellectual skills and traits of creativity.

Indicate which of the listed skills and traits receive daily (D) or weekly (W) emphasis in stated objectives, classroom dialogue, assignments, curricular materials, examination questions and reward systems in your gifted-child or talent development program.

SKILLS AND TRAITS	Educational Objectives* (a)	Classroom Dialogue (b)	Assignments (c)	Curricular Materials (d)	Examination Questions (e)	Reward Systems (f)	SKILLS AND TRAITS	Educational Objectives* (a)	Classroom Dialogue (b)	Assignments (c)	Curricular Materials (d)	Examination Questions (e)	Reward Systems (f)
1. Translation							11. Sensitivity to Problems						
2. Interpretation							12. Adaptive Flexibility						
3. Extrapolation							13. Expressional Fluency						
4. Application							14. Originality						
5. Analysis							15. Extending Awareness						
6. Synthesis							16. Overcoming Obstacles to Thinking						
7. Evaluation							17. Overcoming Obstacles to Doing						
8. Divergent Thinking							18. Providing New and Worthwhile Products						
9. Convergent Thinking													
10. Evaluative Thinking													

1-7 from *The Taxonomy of Education Objectives: Cognitive Domain* by Bloom and others (1956)
8-10 from "The Structure of the Intellect" by J. P. Guilford (1960)
*Individual and group or class objectives, including expectancies which are appropriate for the gifted and measureable or observable criteria.

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Part IV

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION
AND
PROGRAMMING
FOR
RURAL GIFTED STUDENTS

by
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Northwest Kansas
Educational Cooperative

(The author was awarded a fellowship at Indiana State University (Terre Haute) for graduate study beginning with the fall term, 1977.)

Program Implementation and Programming For Rural Gifted Students

Rural Gifted Education has some flexibility that is not often present in large school systems. Individualization of curriculum is quite easily attained. This doesn't mean that it is always done, but the ease and flexibility exists.

The major problem that one faces when programming for gifted education in rural areas is the lack of enriching experiences and cultural opportunities for the students. If this can be supplied, rural schools can offer equal, or superior, gifted education.

What is the purpose of a program for gifted students, in any locale? Why is a qualitatively different program necessary?

Public schools, because they are public schools, must plan their curricula to meet the majority of their student population. . .even if they are small rural schools. It would not be economically feasible nor successful to plan for a minority of the population.

Social Responsibilities

We therefore must incorporate additions to our curriculum to meet the academic needs of students who are not part of the majority. Most educators realize that, coupled with our academic responsibility to our students, we also have social responsibilities. This is one reason why acceleration through the grades, although it's not bad, is not enough.

Our physical education and athletic programs are designed to help students reach their full potential. Our competitive athletic programs are certainly not designed for the majority of the students. Poor athletic education results when there is no relationship between the physical education program and the competitive athletic programs. The same thing is true with academic programs. Regular programming and special programming are both necessary, and can and should be complementary.

The gifted students should have opportunities just the same as the gifted athlete. Often, they are the same person.

Probably the most efficient and effective way of getting services to rural gifted students is through an educational cooperative, serving several schools. A single consultant for gifted students can be hired by several districts, but an educational cooperative to serve all students with special needs can offer more comprehensive assistance.

Even though several hundred miles from "downtown," there are many gifted and talented students in the most rural setting of already-rural Kansas. As many students, or more, than "downtown."

How can these extremely bright and talented students comprehend, and feel a part of, those urban-caused happenings by which they are so effected?

These students feel as deeply, and are aware of almost as many things as those bright students in metropolitan centers. But they have little input for first-hand knowledge of the things that contribute to world change and direction.

What can educators do to give all, and especially the bright, an equal education? Do we need to change our values for educating our children? Do they have any chance to do multi-faceted things? Can they pursue any field in which they have an interest? Have we no choice but to educate them to be gifted farmers, agronomists, agribusinessmen?

The Northwest Kansas Educational Cooperative is working under the assumption that these rural students can be given an equal or superior education to that found in the major metropolitan areas.

The northwesternmost eleven counties in Kansas comprise the Northwest Kansas Education Cooperative (NKEC). The area touches Colorado, and Nebraska. It is located 200 miles east of Denver, 300 miles southwest of Lincoln, 450 miles northwest of Oklahoma City, and 200 miles west of Salina, Kansas. . .that's rural. The NKEC is comprised of 20 school districts in a 30,000-square kilometer area, but the total school population is only 11,000 students.

The aforementioned reasons are why the cooperative exists. The cooperative assists the schools with their Special Education, Vocational Education, and Career Education. There is a materials center with two curriculum vans and a curriculum consultant. There is a van and consultant specifically for migrant education which has a reading consultant and a gifted consultant—even though he is always being introduced as "The Consultant for the Gifted."

Implementation Steps

Kansas has mandated gifted education or "education of the gifted." These are the steps taken for implementation of gifted programs:

1. *Meet with the administration to assess needs and possibilities.*
   A program that works quite well in one school system will not necessarily be applicable to another. An already existing resource room may be ideal in one school, while a regular classroom for one or two periods a day would work better in another. It's not essential that gifted students meet as a group every day. It *is* essential, however, that they meet. This should be scheduled in the least restrictive manner and that will vary with schools.

2. *Identify a person in the system for whom the administration would be willing to allocate extra time to facilitate a class.*
   In rural areas it is almost impossible to advertise and hire qualified teachers of the gifted. Try to locate

interested, outstanding teachers and give assistance and incentives to help them become certified.

3. *Meet with the prospective teacher and the administration for further assessment.*
   Input and open communication between any special class and the administration is vitally important.

4. *Have an inservice for the teachers in the school where the program will be implemented.*
   If communicating between the class and the administration is important, communication between the class and the classroom teachers is probably the most important determinant of success or failure of the program. Special classes are in existence to complement the regular class programming, not supplant it. Active participation by the classroom teachers is a way of enriching the students *and* teachers; both can benefit greatly. There are many areas in which teachers have expertise that they don't use in the classrooms. A special class for gifted is a good way to tap this seldom-used resource.

5. *Identify students.*
   Keep in mind that you are identifying your students for the class you have determined best meets the needs of your population. It makes no sense to set up a class for academically gifted students, and then use artistic talent as identification criteria. Even a class for gifted students can't be a panacea. The class was designed with a specific purpose and that purpose must be of primary importance when selecting students.

6. *Meet with students to assess needs and interests.*
   No matter how much expertise we develop in psychology and curriculums, we still don't know as much about the student as the student does. With their knowledge, and our expertise, there can be quite valid assessments made for implementing curriculum.

7. *Meet with parents to inform and to elicit resources.*
   Parents not only need to be informed about their children but they need to be encouraged to take an active part in their education. Most parents have the same valuable resources of knowledge as do the teachers. This is another addition to the curriculum that is important. Also, some parents do not understand giftedness. There are many theories about where gifted children come from but no matter where, the parents still need to be informed about the many facets of giftedness.

8. *Fill student and facilitator requests.*
   Now that things have been pretty well arranged, it is very important to get *something* to the students. To begin they don't need materials and information covering the entire spectrum of their area of study. That is even counterproductive because the student will become overwhelmed and may lose interest. Even as little as a preliminary activity and an address for other information is sufficient. It is especially important to start the student while the interest is high. After gifted students have been guided into initial action or course of study, they usually become self-motivating. This takes care of motivation—probably the most difficult aspect of public education. With a minimum of assistance, encouragement, and facilitation, gifted students can best be served by creating an environment and atmosphere conducive to study (classical music is an excellent aspect) and then, mostly, stay out of the way.

9. *Incorporate resources. . .especially teachers*
   The lines of communication are open, and they must remain open. If teachers, parents, and patrons have an input into the class, and the class to them, there will exist a positive atmosphere that is conducive to improvement of both school and community.

The Kansas Honors Symposium

This symposium is an amplified telephone system through Kansas State University, and the Regents' Continuing Education Network. Over this system speak some of the nation's most contemporary experts, which include the following: Arthur Schlesinger, Kurt Vonnegut, Rolla May, Jack Anderson, Norman Cousins, Jo Freeman, Gordon Parks, John Coleman, Sissy Farenthold, and Bel Kaufman.

All of the outstanding students in Kansas have access to this program, but it's especially beneficial to the students in the very rural areas. The format is that the speaker gives a 30-45 minute talk, there is break for ingestion, and then an hour session where the students can react or ask questions of the speaker who is sitting at home or in the office, talking over this amplified phone system.

That is one part of acculturation, but what about the day-to-day studies in the gifted lab or individual study time? Extensive use is made of career education materials and there are catalogs for free and inexpensive materials. Several free film services exist.

The skills of the facilitator of the lab are also important. The expertise of all of the consultants can be used, as well as the expertise of the administrators, teachers, and the local constituency. There is a wealth of knowledge that people don't use professionally; it just has to be found. Often, giving the students the addresses so they will have experience getting information on their own is beneficial. Students are encouraged to enter contests and fairs, and the consultant's job is to find out what exists in that line. There are film-making and writing contests, programs shared with other schools, science and art fairs, and pen pal programs.

Try to get the students involved. The more things to which they can be exposed, the better their chance to choose a career in which they are interested and capable.

Foreign language studies are an addition to what is already offered. Even in rural Kansas, there are people who have a command of French, Spanish, Chinese Mandarin, High and Low German, Vietnamese, and Japanese. Use teachers, students, parents and friends. The purpose is not to make native speakers of the students. You should simply try to give them a familiarity and introduction to the language and culture. There are similar resources in all communities. Look for them.

What is the most important part of teaching the gifted and talented, rural or not? **Lead, and allow them to take the responsibility for their own education.** With that, even if they should get an inferior teacher, or if home stimulus is lacking, they may still have a chance to succeed.

What can they study? Anything. Do I mean astrophysics, biofeedback, geomagnetics, or pyramid or biomagnetic energy, ESP, even anatomy? I do. If bright students are interested in something then they will find a way to learn about it. It is better for them to learn in a positive envrionment, from a knowledgeable person than on the playground, in an alley, or surreptitiously.

Can they quit in the middle of something? Certainly. Haven't you ever picked up a book that looked interesting, only to learn that it was not what you thought? If you tried to force your way through it you probably didn't make it and, either way, you wasted a lot of time. Not completing something isn't encouraged, but these students should have the same prerogatives as you and I. It's *their* education. Also, getting into several areas in depth, and having the non-commital option of being able to "fail," is better than changing majors or business colleges several times.

All these things can be of help when implementing programs for rural gifted students, but the most important aspect for rural, urban, handicapped, or disadvantaged gifted is *attitude*. "Why nots" rather than "whys." "What ifs" rather than "can'ts." "Let's find outs" rather than "I don't knows"—even though "I don't know" is something the facilitators will be tempted to say because of the incessant, perceptive questions.

Tom Edson, speaking in Oklahoma a few years ago said, "If we don't identify and make provisions for our gifted youth, we shall lose our society's leadership." I believe he's right. There's a sort of raw individualism about many of the people raised in a rural environment. This, coupled with brilliance and a perception deeper than most, is the type of overwhelming power that has caused man to become more than he was, and is the potential to make us what we have never been.

BOOKS AVAILABLE

from National/State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and the Talented
Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office
County Office Building
Ventura, California 93009

- A Guidebook for Evaluating Programs for the Gifted and Talented
- A Guide Toward Better Teaching for the Gifted
- A Handbook for Parents of Gifted and Talented
- A New Generation of Leadership: Education for the Gifted in Leadership
- Developing a Written Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students
- Everyday Enrichment for Gifted Children at Home and School
- Ideas for Urban/Rural Gifted/Talented: Case Histories and Program Plans
- New Directions for Gifted Education
- PAB (Parent-Administration-Board Member) Conference Report and Follow-Up
- Parentspeak on Gifted and Talented Children
- Promising Practices: Teaching the Disadvantaged Gifted
- Providing Programs for the Gifted and Talented
- Self-Directed Study Guide on the Education of the Gifted and the Talented
- The First National Conference on Disadvantaged Gifted
- The Identification of the Gifted and Talented